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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased by 1.2 million (Office of National Statistics 1999). The number of people aged 85 and over has increased by 0.5 million in the same period. The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 2.5 million by the year 2020, and the number of people aged 75 and over is projected to increase by 2.0 million (Office of National Statistics 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop strategies to meet the needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for ageing, which sets out the government's commitment to improve the lives of older people. The strategy is based on three main principles: (1) to ensure that older people have the opportunity to live independently and actively; (2) to ensure that older people have access to the services and support they need; and (3) to ensure that older people are treated with respect and dignity.

The strategy is based on the following assumptions: (1) that older people are a valuable resource; (2) that older people have the right to live independently and actively; (3) that older people have the right to access the services and support they need; and (4) that older people should be treated with respect and dignity. The strategy is based on the following objectives: (1) to improve the lives of older people; (2) to ensure that older people have the opportunity to live independently and actively; (3) to ensure that older people have access to the services and support they need; and (4) to ensure that older people are treated with respect and dignity.

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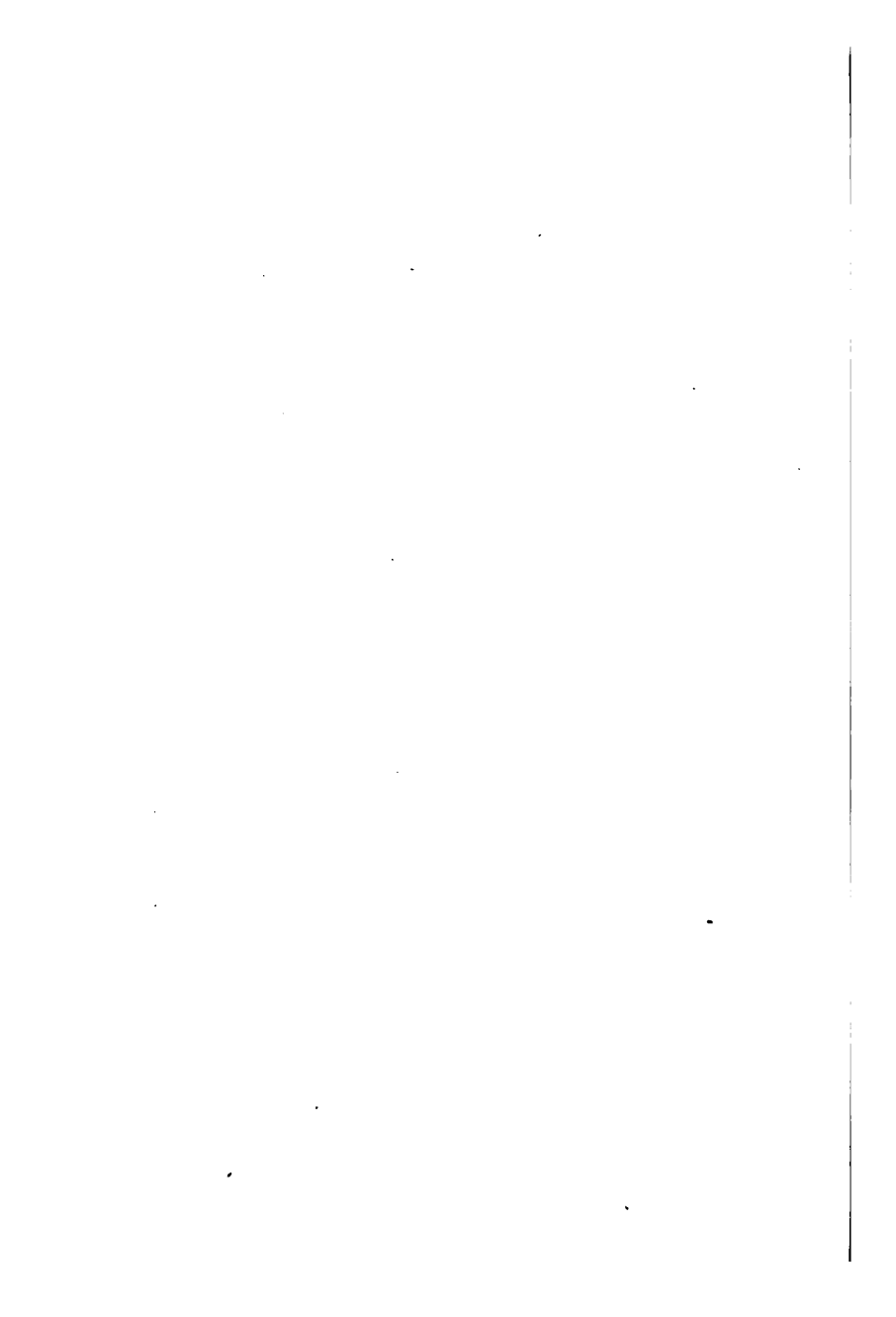
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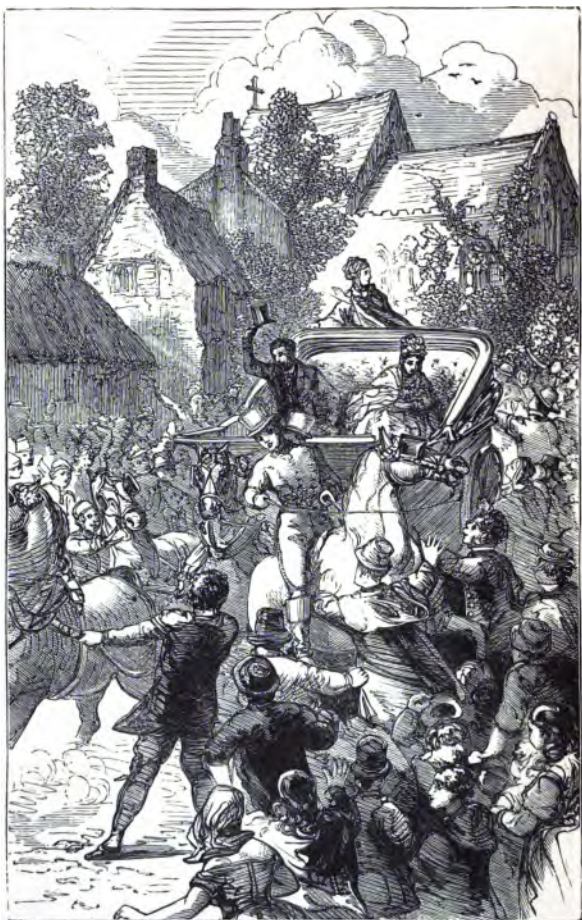
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IRISH PRIESTS
AND
ENGLISH LANDLORDS.





"Their career was soon arrested by crowds of men, women, and children, who, rushing upon them from all sides in a dense mass, completely impeded their further progress." PAGE 14.

IRISH PRIESTS
AND
ENGLISH LANDLORDS.

BY THE LATE
REV. GEORGE BRITTAINE, M.A.,
Rector of Kilcommack, Co. Longford.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED, BY THE
REV. HENRY SEDDALL, B.A.,
Association Secretary of the Church Missionary Society in Ireland.
Author of "Historical Sketches of Romanism;"
"Malta, Past and Present;" "The Missionary History of Sierra Leone," etc.

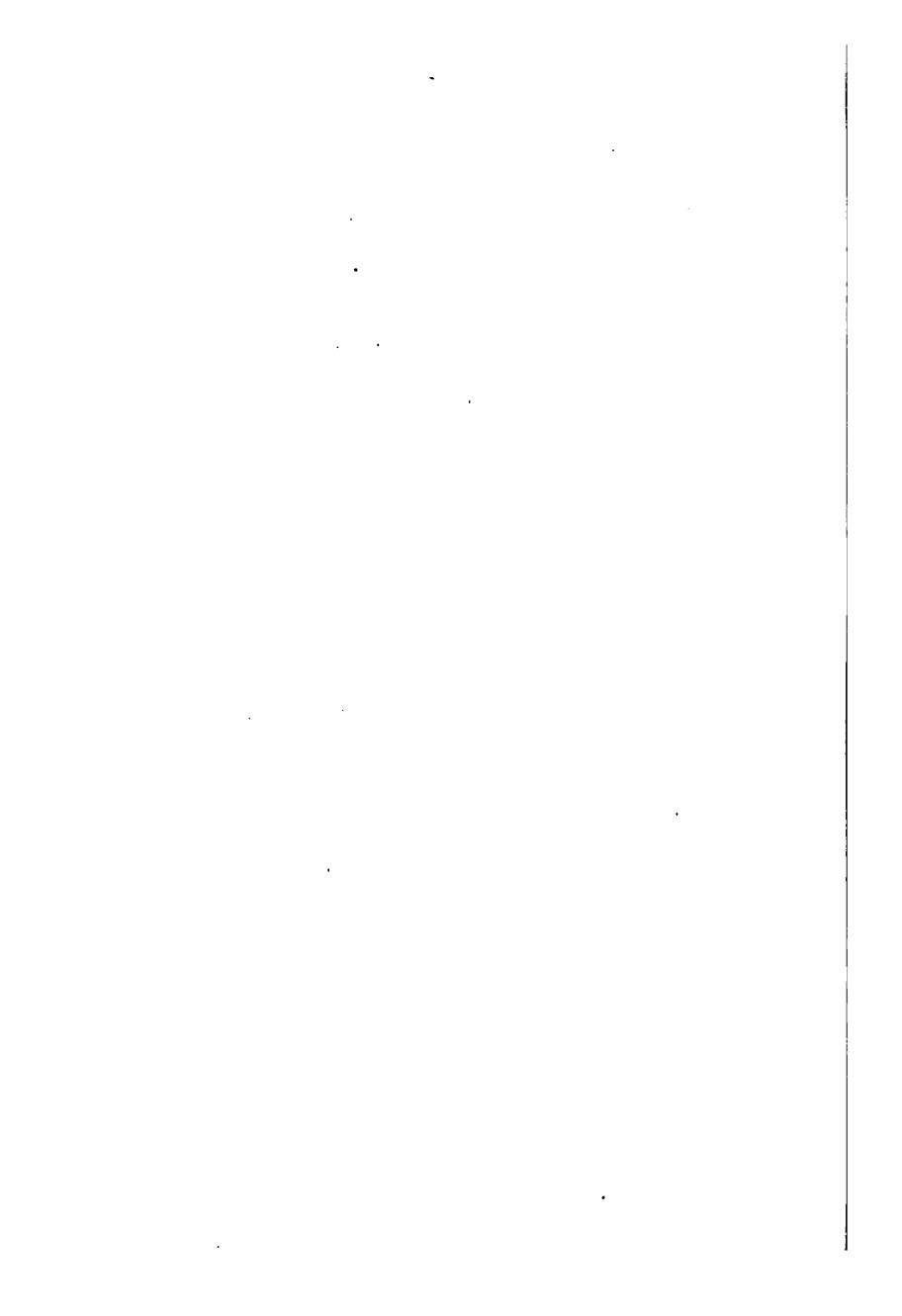
SECOND EDITION.




London:
WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,
12, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1879.

251. c. 940.



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

HE following tale is one of a series written and published nearly forty years ago by the Rev. George Brittaine, Rector of Kilcommack, in the County of Longford. For many years the whole series has been out of print. As Ireland is now attracting a great deal of attention, and compelling an inquiry into the causes of her chronic discontent, the representatives of the late Mr. Brittaine have thought it advisable to re-publish his tales, and they have done me the honour to ask me to prepare this new edition for the press. I have, accordingly, re-written

and completely revised the first of the tales,—"Irish Priests and English Landlords." I have not made any material alteration in the incidents, but have introduced explanatory sentences here and there, where they appeared to be required, in order to impart greater clearness to the narrative. I have also prefixed titles to the chapters, so that the reader may have in his mind the prominent incident in each. For the same reason I have placed a title at the head of each page.

The condition of the Irish Roman Catholic peasant is not materially different from what it was forty years ago. Education has made progress, and wealth has increased; but the farming classes—especially in the west and south—are as much under the influence of political adventurers and ecclesi-

astical despots as ever they were. In proof of this assertion I appeal to the columns of the daily press, which tell of the dangerous agitation now going on in connection with the "Land Question;" and which tell also of outrages perpetrated against unoffending Protestants in the sacred name of "Religion."

The influence of Irish Roman Catholic priests is not quite so great as it was when Mr. Brittain's tales were written; but it is still powerful enough to be the source of much mischief. If Irish peasants are disloyal and disaffected, it is because the seeds of disloyalty and disaffection are sown in their hearts, and then carefully nurtured by the Roman priesthood. And yet "English landlords" think that they are adopting a wise policy when, like the young Squire of Croom Castle in the following tale,

they do their very best to strengthen the influence of "Irish priests."

In the country towns and villages of Ireland the habits, the manners, and the customs of those who belong to the peasant or artizan class, are very much what they were forty years ago. The following tale, therefore, will serve to convey to the reader an accurate impression of Irish rural life as it is now. There is hardly an opinion expressed in the following pages which is not expressed now by priest, peasant, or landlord, according to the position which each occupies. There is not a scene described which might not be witnessed now in any village or small town in Ireland, if the same combination of circumstances were to arise. This new edition of "Irish Priests and English Landlords" will, therefore,

it is to be hoped, find its way into the hands of a very large number of readers, who may learn from it that the only remedy for the "wrongs of Ireland" is the widespread circulation of the Bible and the teaching of "pure and undefiled religion."

My task has been a very humble one indeed, but I have tried to do faithfully what was required of me. I shall be quite satisfied if those who peruse this tale feel one half of the pleasure in reading it that I have felt in editing it. If the verdict that shall be pronounced by the public upon this attempt be one of approval, the rest of the series may at some future time be similarly edited and republished.

H. S.

Dublin,

SEPTEMBER, 1879.



PREFACE
TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

IT was intended not to preface this tale with any introductory observations, until a friend to whom the manuscript was shown objected to some of the incidents, that they were not sufficiently probable, or at any rate, not likely to gain credit from the generality of readers. There may be some force in this objection; for only those who have lived on terms of intimacy with the Irish peasantry can understand their feelings, or sympathise with them in the

peculiar circumstances in which they are placed.

The author's aim has been however to give a true picture of the Irish peasantry, to show how their religious teachers, if they are Roman Catholics, interfere with and regulate every event of their lives, and how this interference is in numberless instances tolerated only from the fear of supernatural judgments which, it is firmly believed, the priest has power to call down. This design, it is evident, would have been frustrated if the author had permitted himself to invent or to exaggerate facts; or to relate as a matter of ordinary occurrence that which might possibly have occurred once under exceptional circumstances. He therefore thinks it necessary to state that many of the incidents related

in this tale have come under his own observation, and that some have been related to him by persons of unquestionable veracity. He confidently appeals to those who have had opportunities of learning the true condition of the Irish peasantry, and asks them whether they cannot bear him out in his assertion, that the facts related in the following pages are not only all probable, but that facts similar to these are of every day occurrence in Ireland.



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Irish Priests and English Landlords.

CHAPTER I.

AN IRISH WELCOME.

PERHAPS of all "the thousand natural ills that flesh is heir to," there is not one more decidedly disagreeable than that of being obliged to do something for a livelihood when there exists an almost invincible propensity to idleness. So, at least, it appeared to Edward Eyrebury, the hero of, or rather the principal personage in the following narrative, when he found himself obliged to choose a profession. He had no fortune, as many young men in his social position have. His mother by the strictest economy

had contrived to give him a good education, the expense of which had made great inroads on her slender income. She intended him for the bar ; and she fondly hoped, as mothers always do, that he would either " achieve greatness," or else that he would " have greatness thrust upon him." Edward had early entered into the spirit of his mother's prognostications, which, though sufficiently extravagant, many mothers have indulged for their sons on much more slender grounds ; for Edward Eyrebury was certainly not deficient in understanding. He had a lively imagination, with some taste ; and he possessed great fluency of speech, which his friends sometimes miscalled eloquence. With these qualifications, had he possessed the requisite diligence, he might have risen in time to a position of respectability at the bar ; but like many other young men, he hated the idea of plodding, and avoided hard work whenever it was possible to do so. He hoped to reach the goal at

which he was aiming by a jump or short cut. Not that he ever gave utterance to this hope in words; but his conduct indicated that he really entertained the hope. After magnanimously waiting for nearly four years for the lucky, undefined something, which was first to admit him into a lucrative profession, and then to bestow upon him an abundant fortune, he became disheartened, dissatisfied with his prospects, and thoroughly unsettled. It was time however to think seriously of something, and after sundry consultations with his mother, it was resolved that he should do what many had done before him, under similar circumstances, enter into holy orders, or to use the current phrase, "go into the Church."

Mrs. Eyrebury was sadly disappointed when she found that her son had given up all thoughts of becoming a barrister, and had resolved to become a clergyman. She had so long dreamt of his one day sitting

on the woolsack, that it amounted almost to an annihilation of his personal identity to think of him in lawn sleeves. As she possessed, however, a large share of her son's power of imagination she quickly accommodated her ideas to the altered circumstances of the case; and her reveries were quite as pleasing when she fancied herself adjusting on her son's person the Episcopal robes, as they had formerly been when she supposed herself employed in arranging the folds of the robes of a future Lord Chancellor.

The subject of the change of profession was of course warmly debated in the family circle. Hopes were entertained by all that the change would prove a very desirable one. The Eyreburys were a younger branch of a noble family, and could reckon up a long list of titled relatives, whose services were immediately to be put into requisition. There was an old Lord Clanversdale, who was cousin-german to the late Mr. Eyrebury,

Edward's father ; and there was a still older Lady Anne Wolfburn, another cousin-german, who was mother-in-law to a bishop. There were beside these other relations, too numerous to mention, who possessed what is commonly called "great interest in the Church."

"However, my dear," said Mrs. Eyrebury, "Lady Anne must be our sheet-anchor for the present : a letter from her to the bishop will settle the matter of ordination at once. When that is over we can enter into communication with the other branches of the family : there will be no difficulty about obtaining a living ; but I must particularly request, my dear boy, that you will not bury yourself in some obscure country parsonage, as your father did. All that you require is a field—remember, I say a field—in which you can display your talents to advantage, and promotion will soon follow. I will at once write the rough draft of my letter to Lady Anne, and you can revise it.

The sooner the business is settled the better."

The rough copy was written and the contents of it discussed. The fair copy was to have been made the next day, but it was not: the day after it was again neglected, and so day after day passed away until a whole month had elapsed since Mrs. Eyrebury had resolved to write to Lady Anne at once.

By one of those sudden freaks of fortune which occasionally though rarely are heard of, the whole course of Edward Eyrebury's life was changed. Fate had designed him neither for a judge nor for a bishop, but for the less enviable position of a landlord in Ireland.

Exactly one month after the conversation about Lady Anne and the Church, the post brought a letter which announced that an eccentric old man, a Mr. Dashenvelt, whose connection with the Eyreburys was so remote that it could with difficulty be traced,

had died, leaving Edward Eyrebury heir to all that he possessed, for no other reason, as he said, than that he could not find a nearer relation. The first intimation of this change of fortune came from the attorney who had drawn Mr. Dashenvelt's will ; and certainly the fortune was as splendid as the announcement of it was unexpected. An estate worth £10,000 a year, unincumbered, in a beautiful and improving part of Ireland : a castle and a magnificent demesne, including a lake with well-wooded islands ; three thriving villages on the property, and such a number of freeholders as would ensure his return to Parliament at the next election, provided he gained the support of Lord Eversham, who would, it was well known, be glad to turn out the Beverleys. A few days after the first announcement had arrived, a second letter reached the Eyreburys, from the agent on the estate, verifying the attorney's report in all its essential circumstances, but detracting from the mag-

nitude of some of his details. The rent-roll of the estate was seven thousand, not ten thousand a year; the county in which it was situated was not particularly interesting, because of the large tracts of bog intersecting it in all directions; the castle, for it was actually called Croom Castle, was described as an excellent modern dwelling house; the demesne with its lake and islands were mentioned, and said to be on a tolerably extensive scale; and of the villages nothing was said which would lead any one to think of them as in any way extraordinary, unless perhaps their names deserved to be thus called. They were Ballynagratty, Tubbercurry, and Lisahuddhart.

After the first burst of joy and congratulation was over, and as soon as Mrs. Eyrebury found time to think, she discovered a considerable drawback to her happiness in the circumstance that the property was situated in Ireland,—poor, wretched, miserable, unhappy Ireland. To

Ireland and the Irish she had as great an antipathy as many ladies have to a spider or a toad ; and under the influence of this antipathy she strongly urged her son to sell the estate and with the proceeds to purchase one in England. Edward Eyrebury, however, would not entertain the thought for one moment. He pronounced an animated eulogium upon Ireland and the people of Ireland. "Ireland was a splendid country," he said, "and her people were an interesting, generous, chivalrous race, possessing more in common with his own character and feelings, than the English. They were also a neglected, an injured people, and if he ever obtained a seat in Parliament he might do something to redress their wrongs. His mother was anxious that he should have a field for his exertions, for the display of his abilities : what more splendid field could he have than that which Providence had allotted to him ? Taking everything into consideration, therefore, he was con-

vinced his mother would agree with him as to the propriety of his determination to reside on his estate in Ireland."

Mrs. Eyrebury never found much difficulty in agreeing with her son on any subject, and in the present instance she allowed herself to be convinced sorely against her inclinations. Although she quite admitted that the Irish were as interesting, as chivalrous, and as ill-used as heart could wish ; although she acknowledged that possibly it might be his duty to visit his Irish estate occasionally, she could not be reconciled to the idea of his residing there constantly. Her feelings about residence in Ireland were not unlike those with which most persons contemplate a storm at sea. There must, of course, be something very sublime in such a sight, but few persons have the inclination to become familiar by personal experience with this particular instance of the sublime in nature : they are content to luxuriate in the description of a storm ; they leave

others to luxuriate, if they can do so, in the reality. Edward therefore found it impossible to persuade his mother to visit Ireland with him, and to witness his instalment into his newly acquired dignity, although he earnestly and affectionately urged her to go with him and to preside over his establishment. Nay it was with the utmost difficulty that she could be induced to let Edward take his sister with him : her permission was granted only when Miss Eyrebury solemnly assured her that on the first symptom of rebellion in Ireland she would hire a chaise and four and drive to the nearest seaport to take ship for England.

After some weeks spent in making preparations to take possession of his Irish estate in proper style, the light travelling carriage with all its equipments one morning drove to the door. Man and maid were snugly packed in the dickey ; and Mrs. Eyrebury bade farewell to her son and daughter with mingled feelings of satisfaction and anxiety,

in which anxiety most decidedly predominated.

The journey to Holyhead and the voyage across the sea need not be described. In due time the leading Dublin paper announced the arrival of Edward Eyrebury, of Croom Castle, Esq., at one of the fashionable hotels in the metropolis. Miss Eyrebury forwarded a copy of her diary to her mother three times a week. The contents of this diary we should not have room to insert here, even if we had been favoured with the perusal of it, which we have not. We have, however, been informed that in the first two letters which she wrote home after her arrival in Ireland, she pronounced Dublin decidedly inferior to London in every respect. The county Wicklow, into which she and her brother had made an excursion, might have struck her as pretty if she had not lately passed through North Wales. The people to whom they had letters of introduction were civil and hospitable, but

they had the most extraordinary accent : the gentlemen were few in number and of rather a second-rate description ; the ladies were numerous, rather showy, but unskilled in the art of dressing themselves properly ; the inns extremely filthy ; the horses bad ; the postillions ragged, and not by any means witty ; and as for the beggars they defied all description and all calculation.

Towards the close of a fine autumnal evening, our travellers having spent a few days in the county Wicklow, and made a good many purchases in Dublin, arrived at the village of Lisahuddhart, within a mile of Croom Castle. Here a scene occurred which can occur only in Ireland. For the first time in their lives Edward Eyrebury and his sister understood what is meant by an Irish welcome.

In the centre of the village a large body of the peasantry was assembled. The agent had given them intimation of the expected visit of their new landlord. As soon as the

carriage containing the travellers appeared in sight, a tremendous shout or rather yell was raised, which, added to a *feu de joie* from half-a-dozen old guns, terrified the horses and sent them at a full gallop down the street. Their career, however, was soon arrested by crowds of men, women, and children, who, rushing upon them from all sides in a dense mass, completely impeded their further progress. The foremost in the crowd began then to remove the harness from the horses so as to disengage them from the carriage. This was done in a very bungling manner; and a scene of noise, confusion, and wrangling ensued which those who have not witnessed it will find very difficult to imagine: a dozen hands seized upon one strap, or clutched at one buckle; and the harness was dragged up and down, backwards and forwards without one single step being gained towards extricating the poor patient animals, while a dozen voices roared out directions or wished bad luck

“to that stupid Jemmy Fagan, that didn’t know his right hand from his left;” or, “to that *ommathawn* of a Dennis Toole, that never could do a thing like any body else,” or else threatened “to crack the skull of that pestering Bryan Scanlan, who had no business to be there without a knife in his pocket.” In vain the post-boys scolded and expostulated and threatened and offered “to undo the horses in no time if they would but be quiet for one minute:” nobody would listen, and nobody could be quiet.

Edward Eyrebury enjoyed the scene amazingly and quite entered into the spirit of it. His sister could not make up her mind whether to be alarmed or amused; but whilst she was hesitating, high above all the din and uproar was heard the shrill voice of her English maid, Winter, who from her seat on the dickey was alternately screaming for help or imploring for mercy.

“Never fear, Miss,” called out a good humoured lad, “never fear: just sit quiet

where you are, and you'll see in what style we'll draw you to the castle ; you never got such a jaunt in your life before."

"Oh, save my life, save my life, my good boy !" shrieked Winter: "I will reward you handsomely if you save my life."

"Much about you and your life !" said an elderly man, knocking the fire out of his pipe against the wheel of the carriage. "Who'd be bothered about you at all at all, only for where you're sitting ? Can't you take pattern by the quality inside that shows no fear or dread. You ought to be proud to come in for a share of the compliment the tenants is paying them."

"Oh, dear sir !" cried the maid, "I want no compliment : all I want is to escape with my life : if you don't let the carriage go on this moment I'll die on the spot."

"Sorrah sign of death about you, Miss," said the first speaker: "the goose isn't hatched that'll eat the first crop of grass on your grave."

The last word, which unfortunately was the only one that distinctly reached her ear, completed poor Winter's dismay: she began to scream so loudly and so incessantly that every eye turned to the dicky, and every mouth gaped wide with wonder. At length Mr. Eyrebury, who alighted at the request of his sister, succeeded in silencing her vociferations; and having been placed in the inside of the carriage between her master and mistress, she promised to go through the remainder of this perilous adventure with as much resolution as could be expected from a poor creature, already, as she averred, "terrified out of her seven senses."

This interruption gave an opportunity to the postillions to disengage the horses from the carriage. Ropes were quickly attached to it, and the party proceeded rapidly and merrily towards the castle.

When they had arrived safely at their journey's end, Mr. Eyrebury made a speech

from the steps of the hall-door, which was received with loud shouts of "Long may you reign !" "More power to your honour !" Miss Eyrebury having bowed in acknowledgment of the compliment paid to her brother, a general shout was raised of "Three cheers for the lady," which were accordingly given. Then the crowd separated to "drink their honour's health," in whiskey supplied for the occasion. Bonfires blazed on every hill, and no sound was heard but that of rejoicing. The new landlord and his sister received a truly Irish welcome ; and when the inmates of Croom Castle retired to rest that night they felt on the whole very much gratified at their reception, the poor frightened English maid only excepted. She declared that if she had had the slightest idea that she was coming to a land of wild Indians and Hottentots, she would have cut off her two legs before she would have ventured her life among them.

CHAPTER II.

AN EPISCOPAL REBUKE.

“**R**EMEMBER,” said Father Dennis Molony to his young companion, as they slowly rode down the hill which led to the long, straggling, dirty village of Tubbercurry, “Remember that this is my advice to you,—to keep yourself asy. Why would you make enemies for yourself of all the dacent people in the country? Take my advice and let them alone: you’ll get nothing by it but trouble, and may be ill-will from both sides.”

“No fear of that,” answered Redmond Garraghan, a young priest lately appointed to the office of “Catholic curate,” in the parish of Tubbercurry: “No fear of that.

I may be abused by the Protestants, and that's no discredit, whatever *you* may think of it. But do you forget what a handsome compliment the Bishop paid me for the defate I gave the Biblicals at Cloonbrefny?"

"Defate indeed!" rejoined the elder: "just such a defate as Buonaparte gave Wellington at Waterloo! I won't say but the newspapers made the most of your speech: it read uncommonly well, even in the scurrilous pages of the Cloonbrefny Journal; and it was fair enough in the Bishop to claim the victory, for he knew you had truth on your side, and you ought to have won the day. But between ourselves, Redmond Garraghan, I was near sinking into the earth at the ridiculous figure you cut on that occasion. Why man, if it wasn't that you were bred and born on the banks of the Shannon, your face would be burnt to a cinder with the blushes that ought to have been there. Redmond, my boy, you were never intended for a contro-

versialist, and if you take my advice you will drop the trade and never meddle with it again."

"With all my heart," replied Redmond, "if *you* promise to take my place. You know I was pressed into the service by order of the Bishop, when you and one or two other veterans shirked the business,—*why*, is best known to yourselves. I wouldn't for the world drop a hint of what the parsons say,—that your conscience told you you were not able to reply to the least instructed of their Scripture readers."

"That's all matter of suspicion at the best," said Father Dennis, good humouredly ; "and if there's any truth in it, we were the wise men not to expose ourselves. If we could do no good, we did no harm, and that's more than *you* can say. Och ! Redmond, you made a bad hand of it, and my advice to you as a friend is—have done with it."

"And would you have me sit still and

the Biblicals carry all before them?" asked Redmond indignantly. "Would you have our holy religion trampled on and reviled, and nobody to stand up and say a word in its defence?"

"Softly : softly!" said Father Dennis. "As for religion, that's neither here nor there; and, come now, don't be offended,—for all *you* have of it you'll never break your back with the load. But tell me, Redmond, who began the trampling and reviling? Wasn't it you young fry from Maynooth?"

"May be so," replied Redmond: "but if it hadn't been for them you might have thrown your cap after your flock long ago. The New Lights with their schools, and their Bibles, and their readers, would have been too much for you, the way you were going on."

"A likely story!" vociferated Father Dennis, beginning to lose his temper, which was not usually very placid. "A pretty story! and very proper to be thrown in my teeth

by the like of you. Which of my flock did I ever lose till the Maynooth blustering came into fashion? No, Sir; instead of losing I gained dozens to the Church. I hope you'll be able to say as much for yourself when you're my age."

"Times are changed," answered the young priest drily. "You had nobody to fight with. The parsons were all asleep and didn't care what was done so as they got their tithes. If I had been in your place I would have counted my converts by hundreds not by dozens."

"Counting your chickens before they're hatched is no sign of good sense, young man," said Father Dennis, kicking his horse into a trot. "You have brought an old house down about your ears any way, and you must get out of it as well as you can."

"Pull up, pull up!" cried Redmond, in an undertone; and alighting from his horse was in a moment standing on the pavement in a most respectful attitude before a smart-

looking elderly little man, who had unexpectedly come out of a shop in Tubbercurry. The elder priest more slowly followed the example of his junior, and stood before his Bishop. After a few words of greeting the three moved down the village; the horses were consigned to the care of two ragged little boys, specimens of a class to be found in every village in Ireland; and the Bishop led the way to a large, comfortable-looking white-washed house at the end of the street.

On entering a well-furnished apartment on the ground floor, half drawing-room, half parlour, decorated with pictures of saints and a large engraving of St. Peter's at Rome, the Bishop sat down in an easy chair, made a sign to Father Dennis to be seated in another chair opposite to him, and left the young priest standing; awed by the presence of his spiritual superior, he would not venture to sit down until commanded to do so.

“Father Dennis Molony,” said the Bishop

after a short pause, "I am very glad that we have met. I was thinking of sending for you to inquire why my orders respecting the school at Drimbeg have not been obeyed. I am informed that at the last inspection there were not fewer than thirty-seven Catholic children examined by an Inspector in the pay of a Society which is decidedly hostile to the Church. Now, Sir, I confess that I had hoped that after my last conversation with you, there would by this time have not been a single child under such heretical instruction."

"My Lord," said Father Dennis, in the meekest of tones, "in obedience to your Lordship's commands, I warned the people to have nothing to do with that school; and I was in hopes that they would have been as dutiful in this instance as they always were before."

"I wish for an explicit answer to my question," said the Bishop. "I have nothing to do with your hopes; I simply ask you

why you have not obeyed my orders with reference to the school at Drimbeg?"

"I *did* obey, my Lord," replied the priest, "so far as it was in the power of man to do so; and whatever your Lordship may have heard to the contrary, the Catholic children have been generally withdrawn. I say *generally*, because there are two or three obstinate people in the parish who, with great submission to your Lordship, care very little for what their clergy say, even when backed by your Lordship's authority."

"And how has such a spirit of insubordination crept in among your flock?" asked the Bishop, looking a little puzzled.

"It's hard for me to say, my Lord," answered the Priest. "It's not because I have neglected my duty."

"So you may think," replied the Bishop; "but *I* tell you, Sir, all this proceeds from your neglect—yes Sir, your gross neglect. Did you not suffer a fellow called a Scripture Reader to scatter poison from one end of

the parish to the other for more than three months before you took the slightest notice of him? And when the matter was reported to me, and I reproved you, and you promised to exert yourself, how did you keep your promise? Is it not a notorious fact that that fellow's head-quarters are within a stone's throw of your own house, and that more than once he has bearded you to your very face with his Irish Testament?"

"And what can I do, my Lord?" said Father Dennis in a pitiful tone: "What can I do, when Peter Farley will harbour him contrary to my plain advice."

"What can you do?" retorted the Bishop: "What can you do? Obey my commands. Don't talk of giving advice: do as I tell you, and remember that obstinate disobedience to the commands of the Church cannot be tolerated. You know perfectly well that the Church possesses ways and means of bringing her refractory members to a right sense of their duty!"

"I can say, with a safe conscience," answered the Priest, his voice faltering partly from vexation and partly from fear, "that I have tried all means fair and foul, except putting out the candles on them; and I threatened that over and over again, but to little purpose: the answer that I got was that they would turn Protestants, and read their recantation in the face of the world. And would you have me drive them to that, my Lord? I cursed them, I abused them, I called them heretics, and told them they would suffer the pains of eternal torment for disobeying the Church, and they had the impudence to tell me that it was fitter for me to bless than to curse. One day I made a blow with my whip at the young fellow, when he gave me word for word; and he and the father threatened to prosecute me if I dared to raise my hand to one of them. So, my Lord, I humbly ask your Lordship, what could I do?"

"Prosecute!" said the Bishop, rising from

his seat in great wrath, and striding about the room,—“Prosecute indeed ! I defy them to do it. Their lives should answer for it. The whole Catholic population would rise against them as one man, and they should find to their cost that the Church was not to be trifled with. Do your duty, Sir, fearlessly, boldly ; denounce the proselytizing schools, and all Bible readers or hearers from your altar next Sunday, and let me see who will dare to disobey.”

“ My Lord, my Lord, you little know the Farleys,” said Father Dennis, his courage reviving a little. “ They are resolute and determined, every one of them, men and women ; and opposition will only make them worse. Sure, they are marked already. One of them was left for dead at the fair of Ballynagratty. They are affronted and abused on the road, in the market, in the field ; turn where they will there is a bad prayer sent after them. Still nothing frightens them ; on the contrary

they are more determined to set us all at defiance."

"They shall submit," said the Bishop, "or they shall leave the country."

"Troth, my Lord," said the priest getting a little bolder, "it's my opinion that they will do neither the one nor the other. They have the example of the Byrnes, who gave up going to chapel last year and went to church, to give them courage if they wanted it. The Byrnes were threatened hard at first, but they stood their ground stoutly and no one has ventured to molest them."

"Father Dennis Molony," said the Bishop, resuming his seat, "I do not quite understand you. It would appear to me that you mean to dictate: silence, Sir! I expect you to obey my commands, to obey them implicitly, as the commands of your ecclesiastical superior. Attend then. Let the Farleys be made acquainted with my determination, which is this; that they submit at once to the commands of the Church.

If they offer any resistance to my authority let them take the consequences of their obstinate conduct ; those consequences will be terrible in this world, and in that which is to come. Do your duty, Sir : denounce all, without exception, who receive into their houses any person connected with the proselytizing societies. Go into all the schools in your parish where the Bible is read, and forcibly expel every child of Catholic parents. Do it, Sir, in the presence of master, mistress, patron, patroness, parson, or parson's wife ; do it, no matter who may be present : and this day fortnight let me know the result of your exertions. You understand me, Sir ? ”

“ Perfectly, my Lord,” said Father Dennis, rising and taking his hat, and inwardly thankful that this disagreeable conversation was over.

“ Sit still,” said the Bishop : “ I have something more to say.” And Father Dennis sat still, wondering what was to come next,

and wishing that the Bog of Allen were between himself and his Bishop.

Redmond Garraghan, during this long discussion between Father Dennis and the Bishop, had stood still, an attentive listener to all that was said. Over and over again he mentally congratulated himself that he was not the unfortunate victim of the Bishop's wrath. Occasionally he looked towards the door, and once or twice moved a step or two in that direction, as though he longed to hasten from the episcopal presence; for he feared lest when the storm had expended some of its fury on his friend, it would reach him before it was finally hushed. He did not, however, dare to leave the room; so there he stood, patiently awaiting the issue of events.

"Sit still," said the Bishop to the elder priest; and then turning to Redmond: "Now, Sir, what have *you* to say respecting Mrs. Ireton's school which was lately opened at Knockdara?"

"There are seven Protestant children in it, my Lord," he replied, bowing profoundly : "no Catholic children at all."

"Then the people have attended to my injunctions?" asked the Bishop, in a tone of voice expressive of much doubt.

"All entirely," my Lord, said Redmond : "there never was a Catholic child in it since the day it was opened."

"Were there any attempts made to influence the parents?" inquired the Bishop.

"A good deal of underhand work, my Lord, as I could understand. I knew there was some tampering going on, so I kept a good look out. For the first fortnight I stood as good as two hours every morning at the cross roads, and turned back every child I suspected. Indeed, there were not many, and they were of the poorest,—going merely for the sake of the clothes ; but one and all gave over when they *seen* I wasn't to be disobeyed."

"Speak English, Sir," said the Bishop :
"say *saw*, not *seen*."

"Saw," whispered Redmond, quite overcome by this unexpected attack on his grammar ; and in spite of the proximity of his birthplace to the Shannon, blushing from ear to ear.

"You see, Father Dennis," continued the Bishop, without noticing Redmond's confusion ; "you see what can be done in the very teeth of such a determined reformer as Mrs. Ireton. Really, Sir, you might learn a lesson from your curate. But, Mr. Garraghan," turning to Redmond ; "am I rightly informed that you are the author of two letters signed 'Bernard,' which have lately appeared in the *Cloonbrefny Journal*?"

"I am, please your Lordship," replied Redmond, in that undefined tone which may be regarded as either deprecatory or confirmatory, just as occasion might require.

"Have you any intention of continuing

the controversy which your first letter has given rise to ?”

“I have, my Lord, if it meets with your Lordship’s approval.”

“My approval, Sir ! My approval ought to have been sought and obtained *before* you entered the lists, and provoked an antagonist with whom you are utterly unable to cope. I suppose you are aware that Parson Leighton is the writer who has answered you under the signature of ‘Augustine ?’”

“So I have been told, my Lord.”

“Then really, Sir, you rate yourself much higher than your ability warrants you in doing, if you suppose yourself capable of encountering such an opponent. I will not deny that you possess a certain degree of cleverness, or, if you choose to call it so, talent. You may be useful if kept in your place, which in the present instance you have overstepped. Your second letter is a complete failure : you have exposed yourself,

and injured the cause which you intended to advance. I shall try and get you out of this scrape, as I fear that I may have been the innocent cause of leading you into it, by appointing you one of the champions of the Church in the late discussion: but remember, Mr. Garraghan, that you were put forward not on account of your competency, but because in the hurry of the moment I could not find any one to take your place. On the whole, you answered my purpose tolerably well: your deficiencies were set down to your youth and inexperience, and all things considered, you acquitted yourself as well as could have been expected."

"That is exactly what I said to him an hour ago," said Father Dennis, brightening up, "when I thought he was a little proud of himself. I told him plainly that he was called in to stop a gap."

"Your allusion was certainly an apt one, Father Dennis," said the Bishop; "and I

regret exceedingly that the gap (as you call it) was made by your modesty, which deprived us of the powerful aid of your talents on the occasion."

"I remarked the very same thing to him, my Lord," exclaimed Redmond, in great glee; "this very morning, says I"—

"Silence, Sir!" said the Bishop, sternly. "Your gratuitous remarks to myself and to Father Dennis are ill-timed, Sir. You are too self-confident,—too proud; you must be brought down to your proper level."

"Father Dennis," I understand that you are acquainted with our new landlord, and that you have dined at the castle more than once since his arrival?"

"Only once, my Lord, although I was asked a second time; but I did not go, as I had to baptize a child on the other side of the lake. I assure you the gentleman expressed himself very kindly towards us, and said that he was very sorry he was not at home when your Lordship called at the castle."

"He seems to be a well-meaning and rather clever young man, does he not?"

"Oh, as well-meaning, my Lord, as you could desire; very clever, and a staunch friend to poor Ireland."

"Talks a great deal of our hardships, and of improving the condition of the peasantry?" inquired the Bishop, as a smile of satisfaction played upon his lips.

"Hardly ever speaks on any other subject, my Lord," said Father Dennis.

"He has some intention of establishing schools on different parts of his estate, has he not?"

"So he tells me, my Lord; and they are all to be put under your Lordship's entire direction and control."

"A very promising young squire indeed," said the Bishop; "and one who may be very useful, with proper management. If he proves restive, he must be got rid of: we may possibly be able to bring him under control; if we fail, it will not be hard to

drive him back to England. I hear, too, that there is a young lady,—his sister, I believe,—is she as well-intentioned as her brother?"

"I can't quite make her out, my Lord," said Father Dennis: "she says she feels quite out of her element, like some one who had dropped from the clouds; and I fancy she wishes herself back again in her own country."

"It would be but charitable in us to forward her wishes," said the Bishop, in a tone approaching to jocularly; then quickly resuming a grave manner, he continued: "I can see no objection, Father Dennis, to your cultivating an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Eyrebury, if he seems to wish it. You will, of course, as in duty bound, repeat the substance of your conversations with him to me. You are doubtless aware that you have no authority to consent to any interference with the education of the Catholic youth, and that any such act of interference

must be at once reported to me. Be as civil and as obliging as possible, and you may appear anxious to forward all his benevolent plans ; but remember that you possess no authority except what is derived from *me*. As for you, Mr. Garraghan, keep out of his way entirely. If chance should ever throw you into his company, endeavour to look modest and hold your tongue, if it be *possible* for you to do so. Do not expose your own ignorance : and in reference to other matters, I advise you, Sir, to be circumspect in your conduct ; there are eyes upon you which "—

Fortunately for poor Redmond Garraghan, to whom the Bishop was about to deliver a severe lecture on the subject of some slight irregularities in his conduct, a loud knocking at the hall door at this critical moment announced the arrival of a visitor. The Bishop and the two priests looked at one another for an instant ; but before any of them could speak, a bare-headed and bare-legged

girl bounced into the room, with a bewildered air, and an expression of great consternation.

"Oh, my Lord! my Lord!" exclaimed the girl, "if here isn't the new jintleman from the Croom, and sorra a one but me in the house to open the door, and it's me that isn't fit this moment to open the door to a jintleman."

"Where's Mick, the scoundrel?" cried the Bishop, losing his temper and his polished accent in the alarm of the moment.

"He's away, pounding John Dolan's pig," said the maid: "it gives us no pace, breaking into the garden, so he"—

Here another loud knock was heard.

"Send somebody after him in a minute," said the Bishop, pushing her out. "And do you hear, you, Mr. Garraghan, open the hall door, and when you have shown him in, be off with yourself. Father Dennis, stay where you are till he comes in, then you may go too. Oh, man, don't stand there

brushing your hat with your sleeve : put your hat down, Sir, and look like a gentleman."

The words were hardly out of the Bishop's mouth when the door of the sitting-room was opened, and Mr. Eyrebury entered. Father Dennis stood for a moment, then bowing to his ecclesiastical superior and to the squire, he quitted the room ; and the new landlord of the Croom estates found himself face to face with Bishop Mac Royster, titular Bishop of Bogwood-juxta-Shannon.



CHAPTER III.

AGNES MURPHY.

No two persons could be better pleased with each other than Dr. Mac Royster and Mr. Eyrebury on their first interview.

The Bishop threw off much of the stateliness which he assumed when any of his clergy were present, retaining just sufficient to give his manner something of the appearance of dignity ; at any rate it was a tolerable substitute for real dignity. Being an excellent mimic, he could with ease adopt the tone and manner of the few well-bred people with whom he had occasionally associated ; so that to a superficial observer that tone and manner appeared to

be quite natural to him. It was only when thrown off his guard by some sudden shock that he was surprised in his native vulgarity.

A very few minutes gave the Bishop a thorough insight into the character of the owner of Croom Castle: to say the truth, this required no great penetration, for Edward Eyrebury made no effort to conceal either his good or bad qualities. The Bishop perceived his weak points at once, and turned all the battery of his cunning against them. He contrived to flatter him, whilst at the same time he tried to impress him with a sense of his own superiority. He listened to him with apparent interest: he was gratified to find that their opinions on most subjects coincided, and he had an air of candour and honesty about him which went home to the heart of the straightforward Englishman, and which rendered it quite impossible that he should ever suspect that this apparent candour was assumed for the purpose of making a tool of

him. What particularly pleased Mr. Eyrebury was the kindly feeling with which he spoke of some of the gentry in the neighbourhood, who were known to be in the habit of speaking rather slightly of the Bishop. He gave his detractors credit for numberless good qualities ; and if he glanced at an imperfection, it appeared to be forced from him by his strict regard to truth, rather than by any pleasure which he felt in their exposure. Even on the delicate subject of some late "recantations" which had occurred in the neighbourhood, and which Mr. Eyrebury introduced, perhaps rather abruptly, the Bishop suffered no harsh expression to escape him, but spoke of them more in sorrow than in anger.

"You may see a specimen of the converts," said the Bishop, "from this window."

They both moved towards the window, and the Bishop pointed out a large vulgar-looking woman at the opposite side of the street, whose voice was strained to the

highest pitch, whilst she heaped unmeasured abuse on two men, who seemed more amused than alarmed at her violence.

"She is a very noisy neighbour," he added: "and were it not for the circumstance of her recantation, I would have long since felt it my duty to present her as a nuisance; but my motives might be misrepresented, or rather I should say misunderstood; so I have made up my mind to bear the annoyance with patience,—a virtue, Mr. Eyrebury, which *we* Catholics are daily and hourly called on to practise."

"But surely," said the squire, "on a representation being made to the magistrates, they would use prompt measures to rid you and the village of such an apparent nuisance?"

"One would suppose so, certainly," replied the Bishop; "but prejudice in high places runs high in her favour. Mr. Leighton, the Rector, who deservedly indeed possesses much influence, and with whom she is a

great favourite, can see no fault in her ; and Mrs. Ireton, who has witnessed two or three such scenes as the present, speaks of her in terms of the highest approbation, and generally alludes to her as 'the brand plucked from the burning.'"

"Is it possible?" asked Mr. Eyrebury, with unfeigned astonishment.

"Ah, my dear Sir," sighed the Bishop, "you who allow your judgment fair play can have little idea what havoc religious zeal makes even in superior understandings. I really believe Mr. Leighton to be an amiable man : I know him to be a very learned man ; yet he thinks it matter of high congratulation that this wretched woman should be ranked amongst his followers. I also know Mrs. Ireton to be a well-meaning woman, and so far intelligent that he must be a shrewd fellow who could cheat her of half a farthing. She knows the value of money, and spends it cautiously ; yet my troublesome neighbour, Biddy Mulhaul, has

so contrived to impress her with an idea of her great piety that Mrs. Ireton has given her almost unlimited credit on her agent,— I mean of course for small sums, which however are comparatively large to a person in Biddy's humble position."

Mr. Eyrebury was naturally indignant at such a perversion of common sense, and assured the Bishop that he could not sanction such proceedings ; or, as Mick Doherty, who was listening at the door, afterwards said, that "he would have no act or part in such mane doings." He requested the Bishop to believe that he had no intention of countenancing proselytism ; that on the contrary, he would discourage it as much as possible. He thought it was of very little consequence what religion a man professed, provided he was moral in his conduct and attentive to his social duties ; and said that he had remarked that when there was much profession of religion there was a proportionably small amount of the reality. To this last

opinion Dr. Mac Royster heartily assented ; and his visitor took leave of him with the most favourable opinion of the Roman Catholic clergy, of whom he regarded the Bishop as a fair specimen. He began, moreover, to entertain a secret dislike towards his agent, Mr. Goldtrap, who was one of the Bishop's bitterest opponents, and who had done his best to create prejudice against him in the mind of the young squire ever since his arrival at Croom Castle.

The Bishop accompanied Mr. Eyrebury to the door, made his bow in his best style, and returned to his sitting-room, to muse over the incidents of the interview between himself and his young friend.

Having sat for some time turning over in his mind what had been said on both sides, he rang the bell for Mick, whom he was anxious to question on the subject of the trespassing pig, when a jaunting car, the rattle of which he had distinctly heard for the last quarter of an hour, stopped

before the door, and from it stepped a short, thick-set, vulgar-looking man, wrapped in a large drab-coloured great coat, with an enormous muffler of red worsted about his neck.

The Bishop's manners were again thrown out of their centre of gravity.

"What the —, that is, what—what the plague brings you here to-day, Kit Mac Royster, when you ought to be at the fair of Emlafad?"

"You may well ask that," replied Kit, sitting down heavily in the easy chair, and adding, with a rueful shake of the head, whilst he slowly uncoiled the manifold rolls of his red neck cloth, "Oh, man, man, I have news for you which will make the two eyes start out of your head!"

"I know it all," said the Bishop, growing crimson with anger: "I warned you of it, and I will be no loser by your folly. I told you the Grahams were on their last legs, and you *would* take their bill for all that money in spite of my advice."

"No matter about their first or last legs," returned Kit; "and no matter if their whole breed, seed, and generation never had a leg between them: the bill was a good one, and the money has been in my desk these three days. Oh, if that was all, you might just bear the loss, and be thankful that no worse was before you."

"And what is before me? Out with it at once, and don't keep shaking your head as if you had got the palsy."

"I may well shake and tremble," said Kit, "and so will you too when I come to"—

"Did the world ever see such a fellow?" exclaimed the Bishop, quite losing his patience: "am I to spend my breath telling you the same thing for ever? None of your preambles; but tell me in three words what is the matter."

"Och, it isn't three words," groaned Kit; "nor three to the back of them, nor three hundred to the back of them again could tell it: if I was speaking till to-morrow

night I couldn't. Well, well, don't get into a passion : you want to know what's the matter. Why then your niece is the matter ; Agnes Murphy is the matter ; your own sister's daughter is the matter !”

“Bad enough,” said the Bishop, evidently relieved. “She's married, I suppose, to Kilbride ? I wash my hands of her entirely : let her portion herself since she married herself.”

“Worse, worse, worse !” again groaned Kit, shaking his head most portentously.

“Fie on the nasty jade !” exclaimed the Bishop ; “she deserves to be carted through every market-town in Ireland. But is it for this you are neglecting the fair, and letting my bullocks take what care they can of themselves ? Of what use is it to be sitting there glowering at me as if you had seen something worse than yourself ? Can't you get them married and fixed at once ? And as for the seven hundred pounds I promised her, why toss it to the fellow

with herself; for he has us in his power now, and maybe won't marry her without it."

"Well," said Kit; "but you're wide of the mark, and I wonder you're so slow at guessing. Is it a trifle like that would keep me from looking after my own money's worth to-day, not counting *your* share in it? Is it the likes of Bartley Kilbride, or what he could do, would take the sense and reason from me? Didn't I tell you how I'd make the two eyes start out of your head?"

"Do it then at once," said the Bishop, losing his equanimity completely: "do it and have done with you. What is it you have to say about the girl?"

"This is what I have to say," replied Kit, making a violent effort to be calm, whilst he gasped for breath, and every limb quivered with agitation; "this is what I have to say: that Agnes Murphy, she that I was so proud of, and reared as one of my

own ; she that you promised to make take her place with the first in the country ; she, och, as sure as you are a blessed man and a Bishop, she is the biggest Protestant within the four walls of the world ! ”

The Bishop was completely upset : his accent, manner, and attitude, which he had with difficulty kept under some little control during the last quarter of an hour, became altogether unmanageable. He rose from his chair, struck the table violently with his fist, and grinning in his brother's face, exclaimed in a voice of thunder : “ By this and by that you are either mad or drunk, Kit Mac Royster. If all the angels in heaven offered to swear to it, I wouldn't believe a word of your story.”

“ I'm not mad,” replied Kit, angrily ; “ nor I'm not drunk neither : though I often was, and so was yourself too, if I would cast it in your teeth ; but let that go. I say what's true, and what all the world will know to be true too soon.”

"Then at whose door will the shame and the curse lie, but at your own?" said the Bishop. "Fine care you took of your orphan niece; and I wonder how you have the assurance to look me in the face and tell me of your doings."

"Donat Mac Royster," cried Kit, indignantly, "you have no right to speak to me after that manner. I took better care of her nor yourself ever did; and I have the honour of our holy religion at heart full as much as ever you had, Bishop 'as you are. Was I a witch to know what she was turning in her mind? Could I see through stone walls in the dead hour of the night and watch her reading the Testament? Did you ever caution me against man, woman, or child, barring Kilbride himself; and I defy the world to say that he or one belonging to him ever darkened my door since; though the shop suffered by it, and Betty Dalton got plenty of custom for her trashy tea and sugar? What curse or what shame

will be upon me more nor upon yourself? If I was at my dying hour, I could declare before all the priests that ever said Mass, that I had no surmise of her destruction till seven o'clock yesterday evening, when my wife cotch her with the Testament; and one word brought on another, and at last out it all came. And did a wink of sleep ever go on my eyes through the live-long night? Did a bit or sup go into my mouth since that hour? Or did the shaking ever leave my hand, or the trembling stop from my heart? Didn't I tear the hair from her head by handfuls? Didn't I beat her till there was no life in her; and bruised her arm, so that it's well if she can use it the longest day she lives? Will my wife ever do a ha'p'orth o' good after the shock she got? and will my poor childer ever raise their heads before the world? Och! it was none of *my* doing: I'm innocent of that, and it's a shame for you to thrape up that much to me."

"Well, well, say no more about it," said the Bishop, who had recovered his calmness during Kit's long oration: "say no more about it; it's a bad business, whoever is to blame. I hope you have not let her read her recantation, and so make the matter public."

"Have I this thumb on my hand to stop her windpipe with?" asked Kit, with a grim look, bringing his fist into contact with his brother's chin.

"You forget yourself, man; you forget yourself," said the Bishop, drawing himself up, and endeavouring to recollect himself: "you should not speak in that way to me. We must have no violence. She will be brought about by proper management; leave that to me: but" (relapsing into his natural manner), "how in the name of all that's bad did the thing come into her head at all? How did the shadow of a Bible or Testament ever come under your roof?"

"I'll tell you all about it," said Kit, "if

you'll only listen, and not rise my mind by throwing blame on me when I don't deserve it. She made no concealment of how she went on last night, when it came upon us like a clap of thunder, though it was brewing in her mind seven long months before. You know after we persuaded her to give up thinking of Bartley, and threatened to turn her out without a coat to her back or a penny in her pocket ; you told us to try and keep her off thinking by giving her any diversion that came in her way, till the match you had in your eye for her was ready. Well, we done our best : my wife and I have nothing to answer for on that score. Still she was low at times, and I wasn't sorry when old Pat Dinneney died, who was, you know, long failing ; for I guessed going to a pleasant wake would help to raise her spirits. My wife lent her her own new green shawl that evening, and I made a gathering of a parcel of lively boys and girls to set fun a-going. Who

should come in just after us but Bartley himself, who I thought was at his uncle's in the North. So all I had to do was to keep them asunder as well as I could, and I pinned him down in a minute to a jug of punch by my side in the parlour, while I winked to one or two of the boys to keep *her* in the corp-room, and to begin their fun at once. Happy I thought myself to have him so snug; and I kep him fast at the punch, and gave him plenty of it, knowing he liked it. Now what could yourself do more for her soul and body? And if you was sitting where I was, making him drunk to hinder bad doings, how could you guess what was going on in the corp-room with the passage between us? When the young ones were sent in for sport, that long swaddler, the guager's son, who had pestered the dying man with his reading and his talk, must come to look after him when he was dead, and in his sleveen way asked leave to read a bit to them out of the book

that Pat, he said, was so fond of hearing when he was alive. Nobody had the spirit to turn him out, though little welcome any of them had for him ; so he read and talked and preached till they thought he never would have done. He might have gone on till morning, only Jem Mulvaney bethought himself to drop his pipe into a bundle of flax in the corner where he was sitting : it was in a blaze to the rafters in a minute ; and then all was in an uproar till the fire was put out, and the long swaddler thought it best to be off with himself. We had a fine laugh at Jem's trick, and enjoyed ourselves the remainder of the night in innocence and peace, for Bartley was asleep with all he drank. But that reading ; ah, it was that done the business. The words went home to her heart, as she could tell me to my face last night, and the very next day she had a Testament of her own, stole out of a heap of them that lay time out of mind with other rubbish under the stairs

in the back shop, after Father O'Rourke seized them from the scholars at Coolnabradish. He threw them to me for snuff; but I never used them, afraid of offending the Protestant customers, particularly ould Mrs. Donlevie, who you know"—

"Go on with your story," said the Bishop, pettishly, "and keep your remarks for some other time."

"I've no more story to tell," replied Kit, rather in a huff; "only she confessed hiding it in a hole in the ceiling over her bed, and night, noon, and morning she was reading it, when she was sure not to be seen. What she found in it, it's hard for me to say; for whatever other sin I have to answer for, I am free from that of ever turning over the leaf of Bible or Testament till last night, when I tore to flitters the one my wife found with her, and burned every bit of it, even to the canvass cover."

"As yet," said the Bishop, "you have given me no reason to suppose that she has

left the Church. Many good Catholics have looked into the Bible,—rather a fool-hardy thing to do, I confess,—but still they have not been much the worse in the end.”

“I can give you both rhyme and reason,” answered Kit, “if you want them : she said it herself when we sifted her, and who is a better hand at that nor my wife ? At first she shuffled a little, but out it all came at last. Oh, if you had heard her. She ridiculed the priest for forgiving sin ! She did more : she said *you* couldn’t do it ! She foreswore ever going to confession or hearing mass ; she said since it happened so, she was glad we found it out, her mind being uneasy under concealment ; she said so much that I was forced to chastise her severely,—all for her good, if she would think so.”

“You say you never had a suspicion of her sentiments till last night ?” inquired the Bishop.

“Never, *never*, NEVER !” was the answer : “we thought all was going on fair and asy.

She went reglar to her duty. Kilbride was out of the country, and she lost that sour look you know she often had in her sulks when you ordered her to have done with him. Then instead of lolloping out of the windy to look at the officers, or settling her hair all day at the glass, as she used to do, she was ready to help my wife with any little turn about the house, and never gave me an unmannerly answer ; besides I never had to check her for rollicking with the shop boys, or pelting them with sods of turf,—things she was ever vexing me about before. Sure you noticed how genteel she was not six weeks ago when you slep at our house. Proud enough my wife and myself was of your commendation, little guessing it would be better if she was choked in the cradle.”

“ We must marry her to Kilbride,” said the Bishop, “ and the sooner it’s done the better. Send for him the minute you go home. Have O’Rourke there before him.

Lay down the seven hundred pounds on the spot. You may say that I see her heart is set upon it, and I would be loath to cross her fancy."

"You need pass no apology to him," said Kit: "he'll be asking no questions if he gets the money and the girl. But *she* won't have him now. Och, it's true, and you needn't be staring at me that way. I know what I'm saying. I offered last night in your name, when I seen the destruction over her head, to give her to him, and to make her portion a thousand pounds. I might as well talk to that chimbley-piece. She stoutly said she would never marry a Roman if he was covered with gold from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot."

"Send for Kilbride as I desire you," repeated the Bishop: "put seven hundred pounds before him, and let him manage the rest."

"He's away to Liverpool with cattle," said Kit, "and he won't be back these two

months, so far as I can hear : besides, what use is there in sending for the boy when she won't have him ? ”

“ Enough of this for the present,” said the Bishop : “ I hear Mick coming in to lay the cloth. After dinner I will give you directions how to proceed in this unpleasant affair.”

Mick made his appearance with a table-cloth under his arm, which had evidently seen much service since its last visit to the wash-tub. One hand grasped two or three knives and forks, whilst the other contrived to hold a delf salt-cellar and mustard-pot and two large beer-glasses.

“ I'm glad to see you well, Master Kit,” said he, stopping in the middle of the floor : “ and how is the mistress and the young ladies, not forgetting Master Donat, who I judge is a fine brave boy by this time ? ”

“ All well, Mick, I'm obliged to you,” said Mr. Mac Royster ; “ and I'm glad to see

you keeping the good place I got you. And how is your woman and the childer?"

"Middling well, Sir, I thank you, considering it's a poor world for a man like me to rear a small family of seven childer : and " (scratching his head with a fork) "my poor manes is out of the question to give them meat, drink, and clothes, and put shoes on my own feet fit to come into my Lord's parlour."

"Troth, Mick," rejoined Mr. Mac Royster, in a condoling tone, "rich or poor it's a quare world ; and your betters, Mick, knows that to their cost, even when they have plenty in their pockets, and money in bank forbye that."

"Christopher !" shouted the Bishop from the hall ; "come out and let me show you the garden : a walk will refresh you after your long drive."


"Walking or driving," said Christopher, meekly putting on his hat, "is all alike for any good I'll get by them, with the load I

have about my heart :” and turning about as he obeyed the summons of his brother, he added, ruefully nodding his head at the butler : “ Oh, Mick, Mick, there’s quarer things in the world nor *you* ever dreamt of, man !”



CHAPTER IV.

PARSON LEIGHTON AND HIS THEORY.

E have already said that Mr. Eyrebury had come to Ireland with the laudable intention of promoting the welfare of the people amongst whom he had determined to fix his residence. He lost no time in commencing operations. Accordingly half-a-dozen dilapidated cabins were seized upon to be transformed into neat cottages, as patterns on which the tenants were to remodel their habitations. These, with the usual accompaniments of neat rustic paling, and a profusion of roses and honeysuckles in the foreground, were pronounced by Mr.

Goldtrap, under whose direction they were built, to be real English cottages; and concerning everything English Mr. Goldtrap fancied himself a thoroughly competent judge, as he had some years before spent six weeks in Cheltenham. For no better reason than this, immense numbers of English people consider themselves equally competent to pronounce very decided opinions about everything Irish. Mr. Goldtrap had, during his six weeks' sojourn in England, acquired an English accent, which he took care to display when in conversation with Miss Eyrebury, who was known to think the Irish accent vulgar.

When the cottages had been completed, Mr. Eyrebury began to think of a school. An unsightly building, planned by the late Mr. Dashenvelt, nobody could ever guess for what purpose, and usually called "The Squire's Folly," was altered into a handsome school-house, where the rising generation was to be educated, on a truly

“liberal” plan sketched out by Bishop Mac Royster,—a plan which it was supposed would give general satisfaction to Protestants and Roman Catholics, without interfering with the religious opinions of either. He next granted ground for the site of a Roman Catholic chapel, and subscribed fifty pounds towards its erection. He planned the draining of a bog, a new road, and a savings’ bank, in which labourers with large families working for sixpence a day might lay up the surplus of their earnings; and he established a manufactory of straw plait, to induce the women to cover their straggling locks with decent bonnets.

In order to ensure popularity, Mr. Eyre-bury gave dinners, and accepted all the invitations he received: he attended the petty sessions, and handed ladies to their carriages and jaunting cars; he gave a house to the Methodist preacher, and repaired the ball-room in the village; he attended

the rector's Sunday evening lectures, and patronised a company of strolling players. Besides all this he talked, or rather tried to talk, to the peasantry in their own style, and only succeeded in affording them endless amusement as soon as ever his back was turned.

In spite of all his efforts his popularity was not so great as he had anticipated, and his endeavours to please were not always crowned with success.

The six show-cottages, when finished, only contained six families, whilst there were thirty-four expectants, or claimants, employed in the garden or demesne, who were all equally in want of "anything the master was willing to give;" consequently, in gratifying the fortunate half dozen he gave bitter offence to the rest. The school received the unqualified approval of Dr. Mac Royster, but it pleased nobody else. Mr. Leighton objected to it from the first for many reasons; the chief being the ex-

clusion from it of the Holy Scriptures. The Protestants complained, with or without reason, that their children were neglected by the schoolmaster, who was a Roman Catholic; the Roman Catholics complained because their children did not get clothes at the school as well as instruction. Winter, the English maid, denounced it as nothing more nor less than a school for pickpockets, ever since her silver thimble was stolen on the day on which she generously offered to teach the head class of girls to mark her pocket-handkerchiefs. The dwellers in the new cottages, too, excused the manifold dilapidations which soon appeared in and around their dwellings by laying the blame on the scholars, who, it was alleged, were ever doing mischief when they passed the doors twice a day.

Then Mr. Eyrebury's dinners, although faultless so far as the viands and the wines were concerned, were not generally approved. The company invited to Croom

Castle was of too mixed a nature. Persons were seen there, and forced upon the acquaintance of the privileged class, who had never been admitted to good society before. It was whispered that he was trying to play the great man amongst his equals, if not amongst his superiors, and there was a very decided opinion expressed amongst the gentlemen that he wanted "keeping down." Nor did he stand much better in the estimation of the ladies, although his person, his manners, and his fortune might have been expected to win their favour. The reason was this: Dr. Mac Royster had at a very early stage of their acquaintance delicately insinuated in a way very flattering to his self-esteem, that he was the grand object of contention, or, as he classically expressed himself, the apple of discord amongst all the young ladies in the county; and that snares were being laid for him extending from Lady Catherine Forester, through all the gradations of Miss Ireton,

the Misses Hackleshaw, the Misses Leighton, down even to poor little Miss Quinsley, the schoolmistress's daughter. This information, whether true or false, was implicitly believed by Mr. Eyrebury, who instantly adopted the wisest measures he could think of against falling a victim to such a conspiracy. He therefore was as general as possible in his attentions ; and if ever in the gaiety of his heart he swerved from the straight line of common-place civility, he remedied his mistake on the next interview by the studied formality of his manner and the cold conventionality of his words.

From the peasantry he received his full share of flattery,—a commodity of which Irish peasants are never very sparing, especially when they see that it is gratefully accepted. He imagined that he had acquired a thorough insight into their character ; and that a joke, whether it were a good or a bad one, whether it were in season or out of season, was a sure passport to their affections.

Few Englishmen, however, except those who have lived for many years in Ireland, can understand or can appreciate the character of the Irish peasant. Englishmen may be amused at those peculiarities of accent usually called "brogue;" they may wonder at the native wit, which often forces itself through bulls and blunders and mistakes; and they may stare with astonishment at the volubility of even the most illiterate amongst the peasantry; but they are greatly mistaken if they imagine that an Irish peasant is nothing but a compound of "brogue," blunders, and words. Most of those with whom Mr. Eyrebury had to deal were more than a match for him: whilst they laughed with him, they, much oftener than he was aware, laughed *at* him, and were not unfrequently deeply offended at the caricature which he attempted to pass upon them as a correct picture of themselves.

Miss Eyrebury had fewer pretensions of every kind than her brother; an ordinary acquaintance would rank her amongst that

very large class of ladies who are best described by the use of negatives : not pretty, not ugly, not very agreeable, not decidedly disagreeable. She, however, gained credit for being amiable and affectionate, because of her evident fondness for her brother, and because of the very voluminous letters which she was known to write every week to her mother. Civil, well dressed, and anxious to please, the first impression which she made on her guests was a favourable one ; but she soon, unconsciously, gave very great offence by yielding to an unfortunate propensity, which she possessed in common with many of her fair countrywomen, of speaking in disparaging terms of Ireland and everything Irish. Everything which did not exactly fall in with her English prejudices or tastes, she unhesitatingly condemned ; and she supposed, as thousands like her do, that if any particular custom could be pronounced to be "thoroughly Irish," that was a sufficient reason for its being placed under the ban

of the whole civilized world. If we choose to indulge in national antipathies, we are not quite sure that some very objectionable customs might not be pronounced to be "thoroughly English."

Miss Eyrebury was never tired of expressing her astonishment at Mr. John Beverley, who, she said, kept twice as many servants as any gentleman in England who had his fortune. She constantly wondered why none of the nine young Goldtraps were bound to trades, as would inevitably be the case with boys of their rank of life in England ; and she was amazed at Miss Leighton not wearing pattens when she walked through the muddy lane leading to her work-school. Every rector's daughter in England, she said, wore pattens in muddy weather. But what most amused her, and what she chiefly delighted to criticise, was the queer Irish accent of which she was never tired of giving specimens. Miss Hackleshaw's peculiar accent was more than once the subject of conversation

between her and her maid, Winter. Of course Winter in due time told Mrs. Bennett, the grocer, in strict confidence, what Miss Eyrebury had said ; and Mrs. Bennett told some of the servants who dealt at her shop, who forthwith told the circumstance to other servants, until it reached the ears of Miss Hackleshaw herself ; thereupon Miss Hackleshaw remarked, and we can hardly wonder at her doing so, that any comments on her accent came with a very bad grace from one who was in the habit of asking "Louiser" to shut the "winder ;" who often complained of the chilliness of the "evenin," or of the stupidity of Mr. Leighton's "meetins ;" and who on one occasion, when asking for a piece of ribbon which she particularly admired, described the colour as "wite laylock."

But in truth, with all these faults, which were not so much the faults of an individual as those of a very numerous class, Miss Eyrebury possessed good sense, and was influenced by sound principles. She had an

intuitive perception of what was right, with firmness enough to act on her convictions ; her judgment of character was seldom wrong, provided time and opportunity were afforded her to study them ; and she had formed an estimate of some of her brother's new associates, far below the standard at which he rated them. The first and most influential was Dr. Mac Royster, the engine by which all the machinery of Croom Castle was kept in motion. Mr. Eyrebury saw no fault in him. His sister had discovered some faults in the Bishop, and suspected the existence of others. The truth was, that she entertained a secret dislike of the Bishop, for it was evident that he had no very high opinion of her intellect. He saw in her only an uninteresting, matter-of-fact girl, without sufficient character to be made a tool of to forward even his most petty design ; and he left her in undisturbed possession of the narrow bounds within which her few ideas could range, perfectly unconscious that, few as those ideas might be, they

included a dislike to his own Right Reverend person. She lost no opportunity of endeavouring to penetrate beneath the smooth surface of his manners, and to explore the real nature of what lay below. Her progress in this scrutiny was slow: it was sometimes difficult to follow him through the Jesuitical labyrinth in which he ordinarily moved; but the pursuit was so unremittingly kept up, that every interview developed more and more of his real character, and each discovery necessarily lowered him a step in her estimation; whilst Mr. Leighton, against whom the Bishop did his best to prejudice her brother, rose rapidly in her good opinion.

“I see you are infected with the mania that rages in this neighbourhood,” said Mr. Eyrebury to her one day, when she was trying to set Mr. Leighton’s conduct in a favourable point of view: “You are becoming a Leightonite. And now, Kate my dear, tell me candidly what you see in this man to admire so outrageously?”

“My admiration cannot be said to be very extravagant,” replied the lady; “I only said he was a good and sensible man.”

“Oh, I give him credit for as much goodness as you please—not exactly knowing what is meant by the term in the religious vocabulary; but I deny that he is possessed of much sense: I deny that any man can be said to possess a particle of common sense whose panacea for all the evils of Ireland is—*the Bible!* Yet your sensible man—Mrs. Ireton’s first-rate man and Lady Eversham’s right-hand man—gravely proposes the Bible as sufficient of itself to remedy everything that has gone wrong with the population! I assure you I felt quite ashamed of him the other day when he exposed himself in this way before the English officers; and had not Goldtrap luckily got on his favourite hobby, the six weeks’ visit to Cheltenham, which gave another turn to the conversation, I know not how far the parson would have carried

his absurd theories. You cannot conceive," he added, seeing that his sister seemed at a loss for an answer, "how much amused Dr. Mac Royster was when I told him the story; he was quite sorry that I had not asked Leighton by what chemical process the Bible was to be converted into bread and broad-cloth to feed and clothe our wretched peasantry."

"I doubt whether Dr. Mac Royster would have ventured to ask Mr. Leighton that question had he been present," said Miss Eyrebury, in her usual quiet manner.

"Ventured!" said her brother, indignantly: "and pray, why not?"

"I can't exactly tell," said she; "but I think not. Mr. Leighton appears to me never to put forward an opinion without being able to defend it. Dr. Mac Royster, on the contrary, sometimes makes assertions a little too strongly; and when asked to prove his assertions, all that can be got from him is a sneer, which it

appears to me is the strongest part of his argument."

"You are very far gone, Kate,—you are certainly on the high road to the gas factory, as Dr. Mac Royster calls the new-light system : but let us go back to Mr. Leighton's goodness. In what does it consist, except in preaching long sermons which really, Kate, I am sure you do not understand ; in praying in cabins ; in collecting pence to convert Hindoos, Hottentots, and Jews ; in giving dinners to religious lords and ladies ; in speaking at Bible Society meetings ; in proselytizing the prisoners in the gaol ; and in robbing the poor Roman Catholics by forcing Douay Testaments on them for payment ? Or perhaps you may think it a high attainment in goodness to denounce the ball-room, the theatre, and other places of innocent amusement ; and to condemn half the world because they are not talking of religion night, noon, and morning, as he does ! From the bottom of

my heart I pity the children of such over-righteous parents—particularly the girls. How they must long for the happy moment when a husband releases them from such intolerable bondage ! ”

“ I believe the young Leightons are very happy at home,” said Miss Eyrebury : “ I know they are always cheerful ; and I had it from *Louiser* herself, that she perfectly agrees with her father in his religious opinions ; and also that she would not frequent the places of amusement you mention even if she were perfectly independent.”

“ And did you believe her ? ” asked Mr. Eyrebury. “ Did you believe that she spoke in honesty and sincerity ? Why, my dear Kate, that young lady, happy as she is at home, would gladly exchange that home for another, where she knows she would have none of the godly exercises of the glebe. She would even exchange it for a barrack-room, and is at this moment making a determined attack on fat Captain Copperskittle,

whom she is determined to capture if possible. No, no : you may trust me, Kate, there is a little spice of hypocrisy in all the Leightons ; indeed it is almost forced upon them by the circumstances of the neighbourhood. You know serious religion, as it is called, is the fashion here : it is the only passport for nondescripts into good society. Reprobates in *our* rank of life may contrive to do without it, but that is not the case with the Leightons."

"You forget," said Miss Eyrebury, "that Mr. Leighton's place in society does not depend on his religious sentiments or even on the fact of his being a clergyman ; he is a man of independent means and high connections."

"Fashion is everything," continued her brother, not venturing to notice her remark, "as well in religion as in dress, as Dr. Mac Royster shrewdly remarked to me on a late occasion. Let my Lady Eversham give a ball, or two or three balls ; and let Mrs. Ireton order the "School for Scandal," at the

Theatre Royal, in Tubbercurry, and we should, ere long, find the religious thermometer at the Glebe fall, fall, fall, till it arrived at the freezing point."

"The experiment remains to be tried," said the young lady; "and after all it might not succeed. I have the authority of Mrs. Goldtrap—no violent partisan of religion—for saying that the gaieties of Eversham Hall, some years ago, had no effect on Mr. Leighton's conduct. If fashion has anything to do with the religion of the neighbourhood, Mr. Leighton was the leader of the fashion. Lord and Lady Eversham were, I hear, very gay people until they made his acquaintance."

"And much credit he deserves for their reformation," said Mr. Eyrebury, with some bitterness; "they have absolutely the stupidest house that ever poor mortal was condemned to twirl his thumbs in for want of something to do; and I think much worse of him now than ever, since I know the

fault lies with him. But I have another objection to him, and that is, his intolerable bigotry. Nothing gives him such savage pleasure as when he succeeds, by any means, in making converts from the Church of Rome; even though all his proselytes, without one exception, are of the very worst description of character, both before and after their recantation."

"I should like to hear Mr. Leighton's own opinion on the subject of the reformation," said Miss Eyrebury. "He is a candid man, whose judgment would probably not be much warped by prejudice."

"You may satisfy yourself this moment," replied her brother, looking out of the window, "for here he comes: candour, sense, piety, and all the cardinal virtues personified. Goldtrap is with him—Goldtrap, whose unbiassed judgment, liberal education and acknowledged candour, you can call to your aid if you find Mr. Leighton's flights beyond your comprehension."

In a few minutes the two gentlemen entered the room, and Mr. Eyrebury at once commenced an attack which he had long meditated on Mr. Leighton, by mentioning the subject of conversation between him and his sister.

“I believe you are aware,” said he, “that I am no friend of the so-called Reformation. I dislike the principle, and I more than dislike the results. It is not, however, likely to do much harm. I fancy that by this time you have yourself discovered that it is all a mere chimera. The excitement has subsided, and, as might have been expected, the majority have returned to the bosom of the mother Church, while the few that remain are of a class not likely to do credit to any religion.”

“Of the forty-seven who at different times have recanted in this parish,” replied Mr. Leighton, “nine have relapsed to Popery. Perhaps about half that number are wavering, and may possibly fall

away, but the majority are certainly still with us."

"But what do you say of their character, of their general conduct? My sister wishes to be informed particularly on these points."

"Well," replied Mr. Leighton, "I can speak as favourably of them as I can of any other like number of persons taken indiscriminately from the crowd. They did not throw off human nature when they threw off Popery; and consequently an observer on the watch to discover faults, may make out a pretty long catalogue to prove that they are not angels. I am sure that I never spoke of any of my parishioners, whether they were born Protestants or converts from Popery, as otherwise than human."

"Then you confess that they are but a so-so set, take them altogether," said Mr. Eyrebury, in high glee. "I hinted as much to my sister just now, when she was

a little incredulous. You will believe me again, Kate, I hope without having recourse to an oracle."

"It needs no oracle or fortune-teller," chimed in Goldtrap, "to tell us that no Papist could ever be a good Protestant: they haven't it in them, let them pretend what they may; and they'll die at last with the wafer in their mouth."

"You will remember, Miss Eyrebury," continued the Rector, without noticing Goldtrap's remark, "that I have only acknowledged that they are not as a body *worse* than their neighbours. I have moreover to state that individuals amongst them are not only respectable, but exemplary in their conduct."

"My acquaintance with them is certainly very limited," said Mr. Eyrebury; "and the specimen which has come under my observation has not, I confess, given me a very favourable impression of the body. But I should apologize for finding fault

with a person who, I understand, ranks high in your esteem."

"May I ask to whom you allude?" inquired the Rector.

"I forget her name," replied Mr. Eyrebury; "but she lives in Tubbercurry. She is a tall, masculine woman, apparently easily irritated, and with rather a high-toned voice."

"Biddy Mulhaul, to the life!" exclaimed Goldtrap. "The chapel has no loss of her, and the church no gain. If she was in this parish, I would never put my foot inside the church while she was allowed to show her face amongst decent people."

"You have been misinformed," said Mr. Leighton, "as to the friendship said to exist between me and Mrs. Mulhaul. Indeed, I am ashamed to confess that I feel a dislike to the poor woman, which I endeavour to repress, as unchristian, when I consider the great improvement in her general conduct which has taken place within the last year."

"Improvement!" said the squire. "Why, my dear Sir, what must she have been, if, such as she is, there is an improvement in her conduct?"

"That is exactly the light," said the Rector, "in which I would ask you to look at those poor people of whom you have heard so unfavourable a report. Before you condemn them as beyond all hope, inquire what they were in times past. You have no doubt seen *my friend*, Mrs. Mulhaul, exhibit very violent tempers, without being aware of the daily and hourly provocations with which she has to contend, which irritate a temper naturally hard to control, and which, until lately, was under no restraint whatever. She is the object of general persecution, which, I acknowledge, she does not always bear in the spirit of a martyr. She is hated by the Roman Catholics for changing her religion, and proscribed by the Protestants for changing her course of life,—at least Mr.

Goldtrap's remark about her appears to imply this."

"All I can say," said Goldtrap "is this,—that it is easy to be a saint if Biddy Mulhaul is one. Why, Miss Eyrebury, if you only knew the woman! She was born bad; she earned a livelihood by keeping the most disorderly public-house in the kingdom; she was drunk morning, noon, and night; she has been before me, and all the magistrates in the county, a hundred times, for every misdemeanour in the calendar. And where was she converted?—in the gaol!"

"Leaving her saintship and the gaol out of the question," said Mr. Leighton, "it is but fair to say that *now* she is sober, honest, and industrious. I do not justify her giving way to an ungovernable temper; I only say that she has abundant provocation. I do not bring her forward as a pattern of perfection; but I must be allowed to say that a great change for the better has taken place in her."

"A change which could not *possibly* have been produced had she remained in the corrupt Church of Rome?" asked Mr. Eyrebury, with one of those supercilious smiles which he had often seen play across the features of Bishop Mac Royster.

"I cannot say anything about that," said the Rector; "but I know that it did *not* take place when she was a member of that communion."

"And how could it?" interrupted Goldtrap. "How could it? Sure they can get absolution for anything and everything; and when one old score is wiped off, they have nothing to do but to begin another as fast as they can."

"Have you as bad an opinion of the Roman Catholic religion as Mr. Goldtrap has?" inquired Miss Eyrebury of the Rector.

"Much worse," said Mr. Leighton: "Mr. Goldtrap, I should say, has not examined it in detail as I have done. I have long since arrived at the conclusion that it is the

source of all the evils under which this unhappy country suffers."

"That is a heavy charge," said Miss Eyrebury, quietly; with a look across the room at her brother.

"But not made on slight grounds," returned the Rector. "Does Popery ever restrain vice? The utmost we ever see it do is to exact compensation in proportion to the magnitude of the offence committed. Now and then a Roman Catholic dignitary writes and publishes a sentimental pastoral, advising the people to be good. Occasionally a priest thunders out a scolding from the altar, abusing the people for being bad; but the advice and the scolding are equally disregarded: yet the authority of the priesthood over their flocks is unbounded. Look at the blind submission with which the priests are obeyed in every instance when they are really in earnest, even though their commands may be in direct opposition to the feelings or the wishes of the people.

Priests can array tenants against their landlords, even when the tenants know that opposition to the landlord *may* involve them in ruin ; priests can force parents to rear their children in ignorance, even when parents are most anxious to give their children the benefit of a good education ; priests can persuade their people to burn the Bible, or any other book which they may think fit to proscribe, even when the people ardently desire to read and judge for themselves. Why then can they not repress outrages, denounce murderers as they do proselytisers, and exert their enormous influence on the side of law and order ? They either have not the power to do this, or they will not exert it. I put you on the horns of a dilemma, Mr. Eyrebury ; it is for you to say which you will choose. In either case the system is shown to be bad : it is all-powerful in counteracting good influences ; it is powerless in combating or destroying evil influences."

"I cannot allow," said Mr. Eyrebury, looking very grave, "that the Roman Catholic priesthood are always opposed to education : they only oppose it when it is made a cover for proselytism. By carefully avoiding all suspicion of that nature I found no difficulty in gaining the full approval of Bishop Mac Royster and his clergy for my school."

"They have little to fear from the instruction imparted in a school conducted on the principles on which yours is conducted. The children may be safely permitted to learn to read by a mechanical process, with which the intellectual faculties have really little or nothing to do.* After their education is finished, the greater number will soon forget even the little they have been taught ; while a few of the

* Lord Macaulay has, in his "History of England," described the system of instruction carried out by the Jesuits, in the following pithy sentence: "They have discovered the precise point to which intellectual culture can be carried without risk of intellectual emancipation."—EDITOR.

cleverest may hereafter turn their acquirements to account by reading the newspapers to the politicians of the village alehouse, or penning proclamations for the Captain Rock of the neighbourhood."

"You must not think me uncivil," said Mr. Eyrebury, "if I express the hope that you will be a false prophet, and that the instruction given in my school may not be altogether so useless or so injurious as you imagine."

"It requires no prophetic inspiration," replied Mr. Leighton, "to pronounce upon the worthlessness of a system which has been long in use and which in every case has failed. The hedge-schools afforded exactly the same advantages as yours: these schools were attended by large numbers, and such instruction as they afforded was widely diffused. There is scarcely a labourer on your estate who in his early youth has not thumbed over his "Reading-made-Easy," or scrawled a copy on his knees;

yet of what avail has all this learning been to them? It is a great mistake to suppose that the Irish peasantry are totally destitute of the mere education of letters. I assure you it exists to a much greater extent amongst them than amongst the same class in England."

"That I can vouch for," said Goldtrap. "I never was so surprised in my life as to meet a very decent man one day, when I was in Cheltenham, who did not know how to read."

"What system of instruction would you recommend then?" inquired Miss Eyrebury.

"A Scriptural system, decidedly. I have high authority for saying that the Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation. Now, he that has learned that wisdom has decidedly got the best education, and will manifest its excellency by its effects on the life and conduct."

"Do you seriously maintain," inquired Mr. Eyrebury, "that the Bible, which is,

I suppose, what you mean by the Scriptures, is able to change the habits and feelings of our population?"

"I am not ashamed to say that I think so, although I know that by making this avowal I shall sink very low in your estimation; but let us come directly to the point. There is confessedly a great evil to be remedied. Quacks of all kinds have been consulted, and their recipes have not succeeded. Now suppose that I am nothing but a quack, it is only fair to give my nostrum a trial with those of others, when I come forward with pretensions quite as high. Open another school on my plan, and let experience decide as to the best system of instruction, Bishop Mac Royster's or mine."

"I am sure," said Mr. Eyrebury, "that Dr. Mac Royster would permit the Bible to be read by the children, if he believed that such good effects would follow as you seem to expect."

"I am sure that he would not," said the Rector. "Popery is too cunning to let in the light of God's Word on its dark doings. No ; we cannot expect the co-operation of its ministers in such a work : it must be carried on in the face of their determined opposition."

"What a pity it is," said Mr. Eyrebury, sarcastically, "that our legislators are not enlightened on this subject. A bill could so easily be passed to banish all the priests, to pull down all the chapels, and to drive the Roman Catholics to church at the point of the bayonet."

"Every Christian," replied the Rector, "would look on the remedy as worse than the disease. Persecution is a weapon that invariably recoils on him who wields it. They who use the sword shall perish by the sword. I would have no persecution : I abhor it."

"When I was at Cheltenham"—


"Goldtrap," cried Mr. Eyrebury, throwing

open the folding-door which led into the dining-room, "Cheltenham itself could not produce a finer rib of beef than waits for our luncheon." And following his visitors, he said to himself, "What a lucky thought to stop the mouths of both of them at once!"



CHAPTER V.

THE INQUEST.

HE next morning Winter was beside her mistress's bed half an hour earlier than usual, and in a voice tremulous with agitation she besought Miss Eyrebury to get up as quickly as possible, or she might be murdered where she was.

"What's the matter, Winter?" exclaimed the lady, scarcely less agitated than her maid.

"Oh, Ma'am, it's the most dreadful place in the world; nobody's life is safe for one single minute. If you do not persuade Mr. Eyrebury to take us to England this very day, Ma'am, I shall certainly die of fright."

“What has happened?” again asked her mistress; but it was long before Winter could arrange her thoughts so as to give a coherent answer. At length, after much difficulty, she informed Miss Eyrebury that an old man and an old woman, who lived on the borders of the great bog of Moyallart, had been robbed and murdered the preceding night.

“Mr. Lewis, the new steward, has just come from the house,” continued the maid; “and a barbarous story he has to tell about hammers and pitch-forks and blood sticking to his shoes. The poor old creatures had saved twenty-eight shillings to buy coffins; and the horrid wretches would not let them die quietly, but murdered them for those few shillings.”

“Has my brother been made acquainted with this?” asked the lady.

“Yes, Ma’am: and he is dressing as fast as possible to go with Mr. Goldtrap to take the poor woman’s statement down;

for she is not quite dead, though they thought she was. She told Mr. Lewis that she could swear to the man who gave her the first blow with the hammer, though his face was blackened. Think of that, Ma'am : such wicked wretches ! I would rather die a thousand deaths than be murdered by a man with a black face. I should positively die of fright before he could kill me."

"It is altogether a very dreadful affair indeed," said Miss Eyrebury ; "and I hope the murderers may be brought to justice."

"Justice !" exclaimed Winter ; "I would give them no justice : I would hang them all, particularly that horrid fellow with the hammer. Why, Ma'am, I've seen the man. Philip is almost certain that he spoke to me one day in the beech-walk. If he is not hanged at once I will leave Ireland, no matter who stays in it ; for I could not remain in a country where murderers may walk about in broad daylight and may talk to anybody they please."

Here Winter was interrupted by a message from Mr. Eyrebury to his sister, telling her not to wait breakfast ; and soon after she saw him ride from the door accompanied by Mr. Goldtrap.

"This is the first outrage of the kind," said the agent, as they approached the house where the murder had been committed, "that has taken place for upwards of a year and a-half ; and as it is a bad precedent, it ought to be put down at once. I am right glad you are so willing to stir in this business, because the people will see that you do not encourage such doings. They are ripe enough for mischief without having any encouragement from you."

"What do you mean by my giving encouragement to robbery and murder ?" asked Mr. Eyrebury, indignantly, at the same time reining in his horse.

"I said no such thing," answered Goldtrap. "What I said, or what I meant, was that the people have taken it into their

heads that, happen what will, they can always reckon on having you on their side. You know you always lean to their side in any little matter that comes before you as a magistrate."

"I lean to no side but that of impartial justice," said the squire; "and I shall steadily pursue that line of conduct, without caring what opinion may be formed of my motives."

"There's no knowing what the lower orders will think when they once begin," said the agent. "But," suddenly pulling up his horse, and pointing to a young man who came from the cabin, and slunk off in an opposite direction, "after all we are too late. You *would* wait to shave. Don't you see that no razor has been on my chin this morning?"

"Is the woman dead?" inquired Mr. Eyrebury, wondering by what means he had obtained his information.

"Dead or alive, it's no matter now. Didn't

you see Father Redmond, the young priest, go out of the house this minute? He has given her her lesson, and not one word of truth will we get out of her lips."

"Goldtrap," said Mr. Eyrebury, "I am really surprised and shocked at your bigotry. Can you for a moment suppose that a minister of religion would dictate untruths to a dying creature?"

"We'll see; we'll see," said Goldtrap, dismounting and hurrying into the cabin, where a scene truly horrible presented itself to their view. The body of the murdered man lay in all its ghastliness in one corner of the room, while the woman, still alive, but scarcely human in appearance from wounds and bruises, occupied the other corner.

"Mrs. Fannin," cried Mr. Goldtrap, addressing the poor object, "I am sorry you should receive such treatment in a Christian country, and I hope you'll recover yet and see the villains swung for last night's work."

"I'm obliged to your honour," said she, speaking with great difficulty: "you were always a tender gentleman. But it's all over wid me in this world: I'll not live out to see the blessed sun go down this evening."

"You couldn't give a guess to any of the ruffians that murdered you, could you, Mrs. Fannin?"

"How could I, Sir, when their faces were all as black as that hat on your head?"

"I thought you said that in spite of his disguise you knew it was Pat M^cGovran that gave you the first blow?"

"Och! Mr. Goldtrap, dear," said an old woman who was sitting by the bed, "don't disturb the dying creetur now, when her sinses is gone intirely. She said to meeself this minute, when her head was clear, that she never laid eyes on one of them, to her knowledge, before. She says she is sure it was a pedlar from Munster, with his gang, and nobody from about the place at all, at all."

"Molly Egan," said Mr. Goldtrap, angrily, "you may as well hold your tongue, and keep your prate till its wanted. Tell me, Mrs. Fannin, and don't be afraid; didn't you say it was Pat M°Govran gave you the first blow?"

"What is he saying?" asked the dying woman.

Mr. Goldtrap repeated his question.

"No," said she, after a long pause: "I never said it. Whoever was in it, Pat M°Govran was not there at all."

"Come here, Lewis," said Goldtrap to the English steward, who was standing by the door: "did this woman accuse Pat M°Govran by name when you were here this morning?"

"She did, Sir," replied the steward: "she said she knew him from the first; and made certain sure of him when she saw he wanted one of his front teeth, which was more plainer from the blackness of his face. Him in the long frieze coat heard her as well as

me" (pointing to a man who was sneaking out of the room.)

"Stop, Sir," said Mr. Eyrebury: "repeat to us what this woman said respecting the dreadful transaction of last night."

"Plase your honour, Sir," said the man, scratching his head; "yer honour knows that I am ever a little dull of hearing at this time o' year. I got it blasting the rocks of Cullaghmore: Mr. Goldtrap yourself knows how bad I was, and so does the mistress; for many's the cure she sent me, though—small blame to her—little good they done me; and it's my opinion I'm past cure out and out."

"Paddy Burn," said Goldtrap, "I'll make you hear and speak too. Look me in the face, Sir: am I a man to be trifled with? I'll make you jump, you rascal, if you venture to play your tricks on me. Speak out this minute, Sir, before your landlord here, and tell us what Biddy Fannin said about Paddy M^cGovran."

"There was some mintion of Pat sure," said Paddy Burn ; "but whether it was her own consate intirely, or whether she said he had a tooth like the one that Tom Savage knocked out of Pat's mouth the day of the scrimmage at the fair of Ballynagratty, I disremember altogether. But, Biddy," turning to the dying woman, "sure yoursel' knows what you said better nor me, who left my hearing, as all the world knows, among the rocks at Cullaghmore seven long years ago. Speak out, dear, and tell the gentlemen what you said to Mr. Lewis when he talked about Pat, and how asy it was to know his tooth that he lost at Ballynagratty."

"If I said anything agin Pat M^cGovran," replied Biddy, "it was a lie. Sure I didn't understand the English gentleman's English, so I answered may be a little astray, striving to please him ; but once for all, Pat had no hand in it from first to last, and let him get no trouble for me or the poor carcass

there. And now, if yeese have any pity, let me die in pace and quietness. I've made my pace with God and man: the holy ointment is on me, and I'll not open my lips again, let who will question me."

"Keep up to that, Biddy dear," said Mrs. Egan. "If you answer them as don't know the meaning of your words, you might falsify the innocent, and innocent the boy is, to my own knowledge. Hadn't I him before my eyes the live-long night at Mr. O'Brien's wake? and did he stir a step from it till the morning light was in the sky? and could he be all the way from Lisahuddart to rob and murder between that and the time when the screech was through the country? God forgive them that would lay blood to the door of the innocent!"

"'Pon my word, Sir," said Lewis, addressing his master, "I've spoken nothing but the truth. This poor creature declared she was ready to swear home to Pat M'Govran; and that man, who was not

the least deaf at the time, said he would not put it past him,—those were his very words, whatever he meant.”

“Sure I wouldn’t put it past anybody to do a bad turn,” said Paddy Burn. “If I thought they went about killing and murdering people in the dead hour of the night ; and if I thought Pat was so foolish a boy as that, why the worst word in my mouth wouldn’t be bad enough for him.”

“There is no use in staying here,” said Goldtrap : “they are all determined to stick to their story ; but we’ll get at the truth, in spite of them and their priests. I have a little business to do at home before the Coroner comes, which will be about two o’clock. Where is the constable ? Phillips, don’t lose sight of Paddy Burn and Molly Egan till I come back ; Lewis, you must be forthcoming too. Mr. Eyrebury, what will you do with yourself till the inquest sits ?”

“I will ride to Tubbercurry,” said Mr. Eyrebury : “Dr. Mac Royster will give me

some breakfast, and I have no doubt he will be able to give some advice too, which will be useful to us in this business."

"Oh, that *you* had more sense and *I* more money," muttered Goldtrap, as he mounted his horse: "it's hard to say which is most wanting to both of us."

Dr. Mac Royster gave as much advice as the Squire could possibly require. M^cGovran, he said, was unfortunately unpopular with most of the gentry, and particularly with Mr. Goldtrap, who had a grudge of long standing against him, for cutting timber on the Croom estate during the lifetime of old Mr. Dashenvelt. He had moreover offended Mr. Leighton, by objecting to a Scripture reader, or some such person, who tried to interfere with the religion of one of his relations: and Dr. Mac Royster feared that the former misdemeanours of M^cGovran might possibly influence the judgment of the magistrates in the present case. For his own part, he could not believe the man

guilty except upon the clearest evidence; for although he was a wild fellow he had excellent traits in his character, and he had reason to think him a very humane man. He sincerely hoped that all who were engaged in this investigation would divest themselves of all prejudice, impartially weighing every circumstance as well in favour of as against the individual under suspicion.

“I merely throw out these hints,” continued the Bishop, “that you may not prejudice the case, as others, it is to be feared, have done already. *You* I feel assured will act up to the spirit of our excellent law, which assumes the innocence of the accused until guilt is clearly brought home to him. Short as is the time that you have been amongst us, Mr. Eyrebury, you must see that we are a proscribed race. Any report to our disadvantage gains rapid credit. Our religion is supposed to afford sufficient ground for believing the very worst concerning our motives or our doings.

But in common candour, may it not be allowed that even a poor benighted ignorant Catholic might possibly cut down a tree, who would yet shudder at the thought of raising a hand against the life of a fellow-creature? Might not the same person under temporary excitement use language to an unauthorized stroller who was tampering with the religion of his family, and yet be incapable of committing murder in cold blood?

“Then as to the poor woman,” added the Bishop, after a short pause, “her recognition of the murderer seemed to be absolutely guided by the vague guesses or cross-questionings of those persons who had first seen her after the dreadful occurrence, when coherency could not be expected. Such evidence given under such circumstances could not be expected to have any weight with an honest jury, particularly when it is remembered that she positively denied that M^cGovran had any part in the transaction,

when her mind was calmed under the influence of religion. Paddy Burn's testimony must go for nothing," said the Bishop, "for between deafness and natural imbecility he is an incompetent witness. A clever cross-examination might make the poor man say and unsay in the same breath, without the slightest intention to deceive: Mary Egan is a sensible woman, and the person most likely to interpret the ravings of the poor sufferer; for ravings they must be called, considering the situation to which she was reduced."

No special pleader could have pleaded the cause of M^cGovran more effectually than the Bishop; and Mr. Eyrebury, more puzzled than enlightened by his visit, rode back to Moyallart just in time for the coroner's inquest. On his arrival at the cabin, he found that the woman had died soon after his departure in the morning, and he learned from his agent, that four men, including M^cGovran, were in custody on suspicion of

causing the deaths of the two persons deceased.

"We shall find it hard to come at the bottom of the story," added Goldtrap; "for all heads and hands are hard at work to screen M^cGovran. You are probably not aware that he is first cousin to Father Redmond Garraghan, who has been galloping about ever since day-break, trying hard to teach the people to prove an *alibi*, or any other lie that will answer the purpose."

"Goldtrap," said Mr. Eyrebury, "I perceive you have already condemned this man in your own mind. You forget that, acting up to the spirit of our excellent law, you ought to assume that the man is innocent until his guilt has been clearly proved."

"What matter about me or my opinion," replied Goldtrap, "I am neither judge nor jury? I have my own opinion, of course. But he will have law enough, and swearing enough, and juries enough, and let him make the most of them."

We shall not detail all the proceedings at the inquest ; but an outline of some of the evidence for and against M^cGovran may perhaps be interesting to the reader. .

M^cGovran's manner, considering the awkward position in which he was placed, was calm and collected. His remarks sometimes bordered on jocularity, particularly when he was questioned by Mr. Goldtrap, whom he more than once reminded of his threat to hang or transport him on the first opportunity ; and it was only when his eyes met those of James Slattery, one of the prisoners, a lad of eighteen, who wept bitterly during the whole time of the examination, that he betrayed the slightest agitation of countenance or of manner. He accounted for the remains of some black mixture under the hair about his forehead, by saying that he supposed that when he was dropping asleep at the wake, the girls had smutted his face, as they had done to others. The spots on his waistcoat were nothing but

soot-droppings from the rafters of the room in which he slept ; and even if they were blood-spots, they might as well belong to the pig he killed three days ago as to a Christian. For his part he didn't know the differ between blood and blood, if there was any. Maybe Mr. Goldtrap could know by the taste or the smell whose blood it was, as he sarved his time to the trade in the Rebellion of '98, as he heard, whipping and scourging all the poor people that came in his way. The shirt and stockings which he wore the night before, he couldn't find in the morning ; and he never troubled himself about axing for them, guessing that his sister took them to wash agin the funeral, that he might be as dacent as another. He confidently appealed to the whole country to account for every moment of his time, from the hour he dropped the boy the evening before, till that blessed minute when he was standing there before their worships.

Mrs. Egan swore that she left Pat in the

corp-room at two o'clock in the morning, when she went home. The reason she was sure of the hour was, that as she passed John Mitchell's door she heard the clock strike, and she stopped to count it.

John Mitchell, after sundry prevarications, was obliged to admit that his clock had'n't struck a stroke or moved a hand "for more nor three weeks," as his son had pulled it down on the top of his head and smashed it to bits.

Mrs. Egan was recalled, and thought that it might be a singing in her head that she took for Mitchell's clock. Anyhow she was positive it was two o'clock, for she remarked "she ever got a trimbling all over her at that time o' night when she sot up; and the trimbling was on her when she looked over at Pat as she crossed the door."

Miles Frayne had walked to the cross-roads with Pat when they left the wake together, and "to the best of his knowledge it was after two o'clock—it might be three—it

might be earlier or it might be later. God help him, he never had a watch. What good would it do the likes o' him who would know the hour as well without it? It was drawing towards morning, that he knew at any rate."

A man who had a watch had seen Pat and James Slattery whispering together at ten by his watch; but he missed them the whole night after. To the best of his belief they were only in the other room: why he thought so was, that they could be no where else. He had no favour, nor no affection to M^cGovran; but he thought he wouldn't lead a gossoon like Jem Slattery into bad parables.

Here Slattery broke out into a violent paroxysm of grief, and earnestly addressing Pat, said, "Och! Pat, Pat, sure you won't be the death of me, Pat? Was I in it at all, at all? Did I"—

"Never mind them," said Pat, "and hould your jabber. Sure they'll not swear away

our lives yet, let them try as they will. Wait till your mother and other dacent people will say their say; and don't be cast down, Jem; and give a handle to them that's thirsting for our blood, bekase we won't deny our religion, Jem. Sure has'nt we the blessed clargy on our side. And if our clargy was listened to, sure its not here we'd be standing Jem."

Marcia Ratigan, sister to M^cGovran, said that "she accompanied her brother to the wake and never took her eyes off him whilst he stayed. He was sitting by Jem Slattery, and made no freedom with the girls who were blackening the faces of the men with soot from down the chimbley. She couldn't give a guess at the time she went home. Never knew one hour from another unless somebody tould her. Left Pat after her, but it wasn't passing half an hour when he was in the house with her and went to his bed like another man. Nobody could leave the house unknownst to her, as she never

closed an eye with a sick child. She washed his shirt and stockings, though not aware they wanted it, only he was ever partic'lar about a funeral. The hammer was locked up in the chest for long enough, till that morning, when she looked it out to drive a nail into the cogglesome stool, and it fell into the wash-tub, which was the reason it was wet when the constable found it in the turf-stack : likely one of the children put it there. Nobody that hasn't children knows what they will do betimes."

Lewis, though repeatedly pressed by his master as to the possibility of his dictating, unintentionally of course, the accusation of M^cGovran to the dying woman, persisted in his first story ; and his evidence was corroborated by a young girl, who declared that Mrs. Fannin had repeatedly said that it was Pat M^cGovran who murdered her, before the steward was sent for.

"Och ! that bates all," said Pat, on hearing the girl's evidence. "Is the life

of a Christian to be put into the hands of the likes of Mary Carson, a foundling and a parisheen? Won't the word of the dying be taken before her oath? Sure she would swear anything she was put up to by them as has been plotting my death this many a day."

Paddy Burn was a long time before he could hear, and longer before he could remember more than that there was "some mintion, sure enough, of Pat, between Mr. Lewis and Biddy." At length, however, he admitted that "up to the time of Father Redmond's coming she was romancing about Pat and the hammer; but after she made her pace with God, her mind was wonderfully brought about, and she cleared the boy quite intirely; as the gentlemen there hard better nor me, who all the world knows never was the same since that unlucky job at Cullaghmore, that tuck the sinse as well as the hearing out o' me."

This is merely a specimen of the anxiety

generally shown by the peasantry of Ireland to defeat the ends of justice. The testimony against the prisoners, however, was stronger than any brought forward in their favour; and they were committed to gaol under a military guard, there being a manifest intention on the part of the people to rescue them.

On their trial at the following assizes, the guilt of M^cGovran and the two elder prisoners was fully proved, and accordingly sentence of death was passed upon them. It appeared in evidence that James Slattery had been induced to accompany them under the idea that it was a mere frolic to frighten the old people out of some of their money. He had not entered the house, and on discovering what was going on within, had run a considerable distance across the bog, calling for help. The murderers had great difficulty in overtaking him; and in fear of immediate death from their hands, he had bound himself by a solemn oath to secrecy.

Bishop Mac Royster interested himself to have the sentence changed to transportation ; and the foundation of a coolness was laid between him and Mr. Eyrebury, because the latter refused to sign the memorial in their favour. His benevolent intentions were, however, frustrated by the obstinacy of the authorities at Dublin Castle, who could see no redeeming circumstance in the case of the men under condemnation to warrant a departure from the strict course of justice. They accordingly suffered the extreme penalty of the law, to the last loudly declaring their innocence.

“Boys,” cried M^cGovran to the multitude assembled in front of the gaol, whilst the rope was being fastened round his neck ; “Boys, I’m an innocent man : *I die for my religion and my country.*”


The night after the execution a paper was left at the door of Lewis’s house, warning him that the fellow of the hammer of Moyallart was hanging over his head, and would

do his business, if he did not fly the country forthwith, and take himself and his lingo back to the heathenish place he came from. The steward, however, set the hammer at defiance, and kept his ground uninjured. Mary Carson, "the parisheen," soon after disappeared, nobody could tell how, when, or where ; and the Slatterys, branded with the name of informers, and followed by the curses of the whole population, sought an asylum from persecution in America.



CHAPTER VI.

THE FUNERAL.

E must request our readers to go back with us to the day after the coroner's inquest at Moyallart, when Winter's fears had so far subsided by the committal of M^cGovran and his associates to gaol, that she requested permission from her mistress to accompany Mrs. Bennett to the funeral of old Mr. O'Brien, which was to take place early in the evening.

"Mrs. Bennett says, Ma'am, that the old churchyard is a curious old place, and the wall stuck all over with rags, and people kneeling about it, praying to the rags. She has offered me a seat on her own jaunting-

car, and will leave me at home quite safe, if you, Ma'am, have no objection."

"I have no objection," said Miss Eyrebury; "but I do not understand what pleasure you can expect by going on such an excursion."

"I never thought of pleasure, Ma'am, one way or the other; but Mrs. Bennett says it will be expected that some one of the family would go to the funeral: it is the custom, Ma'am, in Ireland; and indeed, as I said to Mrs. Bennett, it would be well for the people if they had not worse customs."

"Are you not afraid to trust yourself in the mob that will be assembled on this occasion?" asked her mistress.

"Mrs. Bennett, Ma'am, says there will not be the least danger: every respectable person is going. Besides, Ma'am, Mr. Price, Mrs. Bennett's nephew, will drive the car; and he told me that if he only whistled he could collect a hundred Orangemen to protect me in a minute. He is an Orangeman

himself, Ma'am, and a very fine young man. He has lately opened that handsome new shop at the corner of the main street, and he expects all the Protestants will deal with him. So, if you please, Ma'am, I will step down to the gate, where Mrs. Bennett is waiting for my answer; and I will tell her that you have no objection to my going in her jaunting car."

"You have a great deal of courage, Winter," said Miss Eyrebury: "it's wonderful how courageous you have become all at once: yesterday you were afraid to walk in the shrubbery. I wonder whether Mr. Price has anything to say to this sudden change."

"Mrs. Bennett, Ma'am, laughed at me," said Winter, "when I told her of my terror, and advised me to conquer it by taking a little society now and then, as loneliness only increased it: this was my great reason for asking your permission to go to the funeral this evening."

Permission having been granted, Winter joined Mrs. Bennett's tea-table about five o'clock in the afternoon, in a slight degree of perturbation, when she saw the number of idle people lounging up and down the street, and the immense crowd of noisy men, women, and children, assembled at Mr. O'Brien's door, exactly opposite Mrs. Bennett's house ; but being repeatedly assured by Mr. Price of her safety whilst under his protection, she suffered herself to enjoy with much satisfaction the society of all the Bennetts, and all the Prices, who were purposely invited to meet her.

In a short time after her arrival, Bishop Mac Royster, attended by six priests from the neighbouring parishes, who had been engaged to sing a mass for the repose of the dead man's soul, left the house, and proceeding smartly through the lane opened for them by the crowd, mounted their horses and rode briskly away, without much appearance of

having been employed in any serious occupation.

"Let me walk on that blessed ground," cried a woman, elbowing her way till she stood in the path by which the Bishop and his clergy had taken their departure. "I wouldn't desire better nor to folly in the track of them all my life, being sure that every step I was taking would bring me nearer and nearer to heaven."

"I never doubted you, Nelly Grimes," said a young man: "but you'd like to go to heaven the laziest way you could."

"Take care you ever get there yourself, Andy Britton," said Mrs. Grimes, in great wrath: "It's well seen upon you, the larning you got at the Glabe, since you went to be a gardener there."

"What a power of money it costs Mrs. O'Brien," said a lame man, leaning against a stone that jutted out of the wall: "guineas a-piece to six priests, and I'll be bound the Bishop wasn't behoulden to two. Then she

promises as much for the month's mind, and all out of her own pocket : not one belonging to him would she let help her with a penny."

"Why, then, it was a dacent turn of her," said a man with a pipe in his mouth : "the priests' dues costs a man plenty for himself and his family without having others to look to."

"You'll not get off so asy, boys," cried Andrew Britton : "Mr. Molony is to be satisfied yet ; and he's too considerate to look for money from the widdy, seeing all the trouble she's in : but in spite of all that the Bishop and the priests did for poor Mr. O'Brien's soul, you'll see that not an inch will Father Dennis let him stir out of purgatory till you all put your hands in your pockets to help him."

At that moment a voice roared from the door : "What are you all about there ? Will you keep the funeral till dark night ? Don't you know the offering is begun ?"

The crowd was instantly in motion ; many running towards the house, but more sheltering themselves from notice under a high wall, or hurrying down the road in the direction the funeral was to take.

"Won't you go into the house, Dick?" said Andy, turning to the lame man.

"How could I ever go up that big step?" answered the other. "Why don't you go yourself, that has the use of your two legs?"

"Where are you going, Paddy?" called out the indefatigable Andy, after another tall, elderly man, with his frieze coat thrown, cloak-fashion, over his shoulders, and who was hurrying fast to turn the corner : "arn't you going to make your offering ; you that was uncle's son, to the man that is dead?"

"Sorrah a word can I hear you say, Andy," replied he with the frieze coat, proceeding rapidly all the time. "I'm just going a bit of the road before the throng : my head gets woful bad in a throng ever since that unlucky blasting at Cullaghmore,

seven years ago, that all the world knows left me the man I am."

Andrew followed the offerers into Mrs. O'Brien's parlour, where Father Molony had taken his stand behind a table, holding a book in his hand, from which he read at intervals, while each person on his entrance placed some money on the table. The offerers came in slowly; but the hall was crammed to suffocation. Mr. Molony read and paused, and read and paused again. An odd straggler forced his way now and then into the room, and having made his offering stopped in the door-way, or joined a party in a corner, who were watching with great curiosity the amount of each person's contribution; but nobody appeared to pay the slightest attention to what was read by the priest.

Father Dennis's patience was at length exhausted: "What is the matter with you," he cried, "that you keep stopping the way there? Don't I see plenty of dacent people

out of the window that can't come in, and some blood relations of the man that's gone, who would be glad to give a help to his poor soul, now that he wants it? Out into the streets every one of you, or I'll not let the corpse stir a step till twelve o'clock to-night. Leave the door-way, you Andy Britton: you gave nothing yourself, and will you hinder them that is willing, like Ody Dillon there behind you? You're welcome, Ody: let the man pass, I say. Ody, I knew you wouldn't be the last; it doesn't belong to one of your family to be backward when a poor soul with some of your blood in his body is in pain. Take up that sixpence, Gilbert Foy: I'll never let it be said that Tom O'Brien was behoulden to your sixpenny-worth of good will. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, a man of your substance. If others are as great naggers when you die, how will you ever get out of purgatory? Do you think I'll give myself trouble about you when you show no ten-

derness to others? Well, you may leave the shilling, though it's over little for one of your sort to come down with. Mrs. Belton, how is your son? I wish all had your spirit, Mrs. Belton: you have made good friends for yourself in the next world, and that's saying more than I'll say for others. Thady Foioque, it's seldom I see the colour of your money; but better late than never, man: I hope you'll mind, Thady, and be more reg'lar in your duties. Sally Benison, you needn't be reckoning out your halfpence as if they were drops of your heart's blood: lay them there in a lump, and let *them* come on that's charitable to the dead. Hah! Bartley, was it from the sun or from the moon you dropped? I'm proud to see you anyhow, if it was only to teach a set of spalpeens here what's becoming on a solemn occasion like this. Oh, Bartley Kilbride, what are you about boy? It's a pound-note you'll put down in place of that half-crown: you can well do that,

and more ; sure I know what's before you as well as yourself. You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth, and that falls to the lot of very few. Search his pocket, Mat Carney, and see if he has the fellow of that two and sixpence in it. Bad luck to them that wouldn't let it be the ould two and eightpence halfpenny, robbing and destroying the poor for nothing."

Again there was a pause, and again Father Dennis had recourse to his book. Another pause,—no one stirred. "Is there no one has Christian charity in his heart? Is the world gone to the bad entirely? Do you all love your money better nor the soul of your old neighbour, Tom O'Brien, that is groaning this minute, and is wondering at you all."

"Oh, plase your reverence," said a man from the corner of the room, "there's no use in keeping the corpse any longer. The people's wore out and tired out ; and if you don't give us leave to go, Mrs. Carthy and

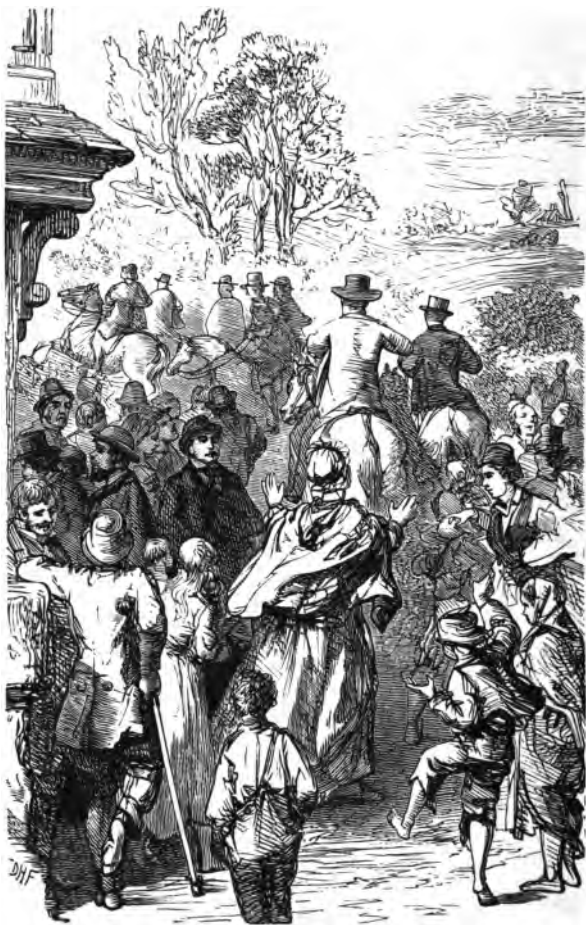
her two cars says they must be off: they can wait no longer, and the mistress would be outrageous if the genteel people wasn't all in it."

"Besides," said Andy Britton, from his station in the door-way, "if all the money the Bishop and the other gentlemen got is no use to poor Mr. O'Brien, what good would our little halfpence do to his soul, wherever it is; so it's nonsense, boys, for poor men like us to be throwing away our hard earnings for nothing."

"Andy, I'll have my eye upon you," said the Priest; "and the place you got lately hasn't mended you. I'll have you on your knees yet, and may be you'll have to pawn that watch in your fob before I'll hear a word of your confession."

"When I come to your knee it will be time enough to consider what your Reverence will do to me," answered Andy, drily.

"Do you hear the fellow?" exclaimed Father Dennis Molony; "if it wasn't out



"The cavalcade contrived to preserve some order throughout; but the pedestrians observed no sort of regularity, being jumbled together in a confused mass, as chance or inclination brought them into contact." PAGE 143.

served no sort of regularity, being jumbled together in a confused mass, as chance or inclination brought them into contact. One party gained head a considerable distance; another party was left a long way behind; some made short cuts through the fields; others held fast by the cars, and pertinaciously kept pace with them, whether they were driven fast or slowly. All were dressed in their best clothes. Old men were seen in long frieze coats, and red woollen mufflers. Old women walked beside them in bright scarlet cloaks, with a silk handkerchief tied over the head. Young men carried stout oak or black-thorn sticks in their hands, prepared for a fray, if the faction of the Devlins should say an unmannerly word to an O'Brien. Young women jostled along in white muslin gowns, with artificial flowers in their bonnets. Others were bareheaded, new petticoats being thrown over their shoulders to do the duty of a mantle; whilst an innumerable multitude of little

bare-legged boys and girls scampered and capered about in all directions, every moment in imminent danger of being run over by the cars, or trampled under the feet of the horses. No grief or seriousness was visible on any countenance except on that of the widow. Now and then Mrs. Carthy gave an ominous shake of the head, or clasped her hands when at intervals the funeral cry was raised. Even those who were most vociferous in their lamentations regained their wonted composure the moment the last note died away, and chatted and laughed merrily with their neighbours till the signal was again given by the chief keener, old Mrs. Grimes, when they again mechanically renewed the cry of sorrow.

At length, after many interruptions from restive horses and several mischances to the harness of some of the vehicles, the funeral procession reached the churchyard of Ballindona. Instantly every grave was taken possession of by groups of women,

who, kneeling round them began to beat their breasts, to clap their hands, and to scream at the utmost pitch of their voices. The scene was of the wildest description, and it took all Mr. Price's eloquence to persuade Winter not to be alarmed. We must say to her credit, that although the words Hottentots and savages were repeatedly on the tip of her tongue, yet they remained unuttered lest she should give offence; and she actually confessed to Mr. Price afterwards, that she was not half so much afraid of the Irish as she was on the day of her arrival.

The screaming was kept up with little intermission whilst the grave was being dug. The women seemed to vie with each other who should scream the loudest and the longest. The men took no part in their obstreperous grief. Those who were not actually engaged at the burial were employed either in attending to their horses or in talking together in parties all through

the churchyard. Here and there a solitary man might be seen standing or kneeling by a grave, his hat and stick laid on the ground beside him, with his hands clasped, and his lips moving quickly, not in the least disturbed in his devotions by the din and uproar around him.

When the grave had been filled up and sodded, and the widow and her daughters had been persuaded by good-natured Mrs. Carthy to return home, pipes and tobacco, bread and whiskey were liberally distributed, and the mourners began to regale themselves in high merriment in the churchyard, which only a few minutes before had re-echoed their woful lamentations.

"That's the second glass you got, Paddy," shouted out Andrew Britton ; and it wasn't intended for you, but for Mick Martin, that hasn't got a drop yet : it's a shame for you to take more nor falls to your share."

"Wasn't it well I bethought of myself?" said Paddy, wiping his mouth. "I owe a

prayer or two to the soul of my wife's aunt, and if I wasn't forgetting it intirely ! Boys, don't all of yees go without me : I'll have it over in no time. Och ! the memory and all was left after me among them wary rocks at Cullaghmore, seven long years ago ! ”

“ Why don't you go and get something after your long walk, Mary, dear ? ” asked Andrew, turning to a woman who remained quite still, sitting on a grave, and in whose countenance the deepest woe was pictured : “ you'll get no good sitting so long on the damp grass, and you a failing woman. ”

“ There's no place on the face of the airth I care to be in, but this spot, ” she replied. “ Sure here lies all that was left to me in my loneliness. When he was killed beyant the sea, and I was left alone with her on my breast, I had something to look at to keep my heart from breaking. Didn't she grow up to be a comfort to me ? and didn't she die after all ? and isn't she buried there for ever out of my sight ? and what have I

now to look at but my own sorrow? and what place can I turn to but sorrow walks beside me, and lies down with me, and rises with me, and is all as one as myself?"

"Ah, Mary, dear! there's One you might turn to, and your grief wouldn't be half so bitter. Why don't you look to Him as died on the cross? Sure He that gave your child, and He that took her away, could give comfort to your heart, if you brought your trouble to Him and looked to Him for help."

"I don't know what you mean," said Mary, with a bewildered look. "But," rising to go away, "I can't stay here for ever, and it's hard to drag myself from it. Och! there's no comfort for me in heaven or in the world, and where to turn to I don't know. God help me!"

"God help you!" repeated Andy, fervently, "and God help them that keeps the light of the Word of the blessed and Holy One from you!"

CHAPTER VII.

ANDY AND HIS COMPANIONS.

THE crowd had gradually dispersed by the various roads and lanes branching off from Ballindona, and Andrew Britton, who was one of the last to leave the churchyard, was proceeding homewards at a quick pace, when a voice behind him called out, "Andy, boy: blessings on you! Stop, and let me go a piece of the road with you; for I can't keep up with the rest; and since the accident that happened at Moyallart, I don't like to be on the road in a lonesome place by myself."

It was the lame man, mentioned in the last chapter, who had contrived to walk

three miles to the funeral, in spite of his infirmity, out of compliment, as he told Andrew, to Tom O'Brien's father, who was dead thirty-three years last Candlemas.

"That bothered Paddy Burn," he continued, "wouldn't hear me when I axed him to wait for me: he never hears anything he don't like."

"Never heed him," said Andrew; "I'll leave you within a stone's throw of your own cabin. Tell me, Dick, who is that strange girl that passed just now on Mrs. Bennett's jaunting-car?"

"She belongs to the lady at Croom: she does nothing but comb her mistress's hair, as I can understand, and is twice as grand herself. Ned Price is making up to her; and a lucky boy he'll be to get her, for she has two hundred pounds in bank notes to her portion."

"Wheugh!" whistled Andy, incredulously: "much o' that I believe. A servant girl have all that money! Why, man, there's

ladies in the country that holds their heads high that hasn't the half of it."

"What I tell you is true," replied Dick : "Mr. Eyrebury himself said it when he was axed by Mr. Goldtrap, who was out o' the way surprised at it like yourself. It was no wonder to a man, the likes o' me, that has travelled and knows that England isn't Ireland : I seen the differ myself, the summer I went to look for my brother."

"I often had thoughts of going there," said Andrew ; "and now will you tell me what sort of a place it is ?"

"Why, as for that, there's a power of money in it, and that's saying the best of it, for there never was so haythenish a place. When my poor brother was a-dying, there couldn't be got a priest within forty miles, and he had to go off like a dog. It's that kep me bare and naked, many's the long day, with all the money I had to give Father Dennis to do something for his poor soul ; but times is better in it now, I hear.

Our holy religion is prospering there as it is in all the world,—and so it ought, as you know, Andy.”

“That’s not what I want to know at all,” said Andy. “Can’t you tell us how a man is to get his living there?”

“Bad enough, Andy: you might have your pockets stuffed with gold, and you couldn’t get a dacent praty if you was dying for one; and what’s of them is counted out to you like apples, if you ax to buy them. Then the bacon isn’t bacon at all, at all,—it’s white pork, without the smell of the turf upon it; and after all, they’re so ravenous after it, that they think nothing of ating it raw, like a set of East or West Indians. Then as for a glass of whiskey, oh, there’s no use in saying anything about that; you might walk till you was wore to a thread before you could get one drop.”

“That’s saying little for it indeed: I only wonder how many is fond of going there, and settling themselves in it when they can.”

"Aye, and leaving it too for better living in ould Ireland, when it comes across them," replied Dick. "Why didn't he at Croom stay where he was if England is better nor Ireland?"

"Oh, man, an estate is an estate anywhere: it's well for the country that one of his sort came into it,—a gentleman that gives work to the poor, and spends his money in the place. I don't know him at all, but he bears a good character with the people."

"He has good advisers," said Dick: "he's said and led all out by the Bishop, who advises him for his own good and for others' good." *

* There are Protestant gentlemen in Ireland at this moment who place as great confidence in the Roman Catholic clergy as Mr. Eyrebury did, and who are not ashamed to declare to an independent constituency that they will be the humble servants and obedient slaves of Ultramontane ecclesiastics. Let the reader ponder well the following words: "He hoped to follow in his father's footsteps, and if any difficult public question should arise, he would

"The Bishop knows what he is about," remarked his companion.

"And why not?" asked the other, sharply: "how could he fail of knowing what everybody ought to be about, a blessed man like him? I'm only sorry that trouble would ever offer to come nigh him."

"Little pity I have for him if he lets it," said Andy; "one that has only to read a mass, and he could turn the world head over heels: but what trouble is it makes so bold with him?"

"Andy, if you wouldn't be talking in that foolish way you have, I didn't care if I made you sensible: but mind you, and don't be rattling it off your tongue to everybody you meet; I wouldn't like my own name, nor poor Mick Doherty's neither, to be brought in question."

consult his father's, and their good guides, the clergy of Longford."—*Speech of Mr. Greville-Nugent, in Longford, on Friday, 31st December, 1869, as reported in the "Daily Express," of January 1st, 1870.*—EDITOR.

“Never fear, Dick ; you’ll get into no scrape by me, I warrant you.”

“Well, then, it’s all about Miss Murphy, his sister’s daughter, that he gave a fine education to, and spared no expense to dress her, and rear her, and give her the best of everything : he was more like a father to her nor anything else. He has a mint of money, and it was never rightly known whether he’d leave it all to her, or divide with his brother’s son, that was called after him. Anyhow she’d have got sacks and ropes by him, as the saying is, if she minded the good rearing she got. Now, Andy, what must she do but cast her eyes on a lame schoolmaster,—I don’t reflect on him for being lame ; why would I, seeing many a good man meets with misfortune ?—but she sets her eyes on this lame schoolmaster, and nothing would do but marry him, and folly him to the church, for he is a Protestant, just as if there wasn’t a Christian in the world.”

"When did she marry him, Dick?"

"She isn't married at all, Andy; nor won't, if stone walls and spancils can keep her from him. The minute her uncle that keeps the big shop at Speddonsbridge, found it out, he whips her off to her father's people in Tipperary, where she kicked up a fine dust; and they don't know what to do with her, she's so headstrong. Mick Doherty says the Bishop is fairly wore away, fretting, and not a week passes but his brother comes with a new story about her. Mick could know more, only they go into the back room to talk; so it's but an odd word he can catch now and then."

"I thought it was young Kilbride, of the Crosses, they were keeping her from," said Andrew.

"That's an old story, Andy: he was no match for her, so they wouldn't listen to him; but it's my belief they'd now be glad to give her to him, or any other dacent Christian boy, to keep her away from the

schoolmaster and the church : any way, she's a sore cross to her people with the way she gets on."

"Why don't she run off with her bachelor, and marry him out o' face?" inquired Andy: "that would set her own mind and their minds at rest for ever after."

"There's not one o' them," said Dick, "that wouldn't break their hearts if she was to do such a thing: and how would she lift up her head ever after with that sin over her?"

"What would ail her?" replied Andrew: "sure if anybody has a right to commit sin, and think little about it, it's the like of her that has a Bishop to her uncle; a man that can forgive anything by proper submission and paying costs. I suppose he might do it for a trifle for her, or may be never ask a penny, since he's so fond of her."

"Andy, it's a burning shame to hear you talk after that fashion. Do you know what sin is at all, man, to make so light of it?"

"I do, well," answered his companion, seriously. "I don't make light of it; it's them that offers to forgive sin for money, makes light of it."

"And who can forgive us if they can't?" replied Dick. "If you had any sin upon you, where would you go for pardon if it wasn't to them?"

"I'd go," said Andrew, "to the great God, and I'd confess it to Him, and I'd ask forgiveness, for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ; and I have His own word for it, that He'll pardon me without money or money's worth. Why, man, if it wasn't for that, all the sin I have upon me would crush me down to the ground; it's so heavy."

"Well, I never thought so bad of you before, Andy. I always counted you a dacent quiet boy, no worse nor myself or another; and it's a poor thing to hear your father's son have that story to tell of himself."

"I don't want to make myself better

nor worse nor my neighbours," said Andrew. "I only mean that I am a great sinner : I can't move hand or foot without sin ; I can't think without sin. It's always in my heart ; and this very minute it's busy with me, though I'm doing all I can to keep it down."

His companion stopped, and trembled with alarm.

"Andy," said he, "you wouldn't be after harming a poor afflicted man, that has no chance for his life if you go to crassness with me ; and what would you get by it, after all ? for by this blessed stick in my hand, there's not a halfpenny about me, if you was to burn me alive. Och ! och ! wasn't I the unlucky man to want you for a comrade ? Och ! if I thought you was near so bad, would I have axed your company down this lonesome lane in the dusk of the evening ?"

"Come along," said Andrew, "and don't be making me angry with your nonsense. What would I get by misusing you ? Come

along, I say? I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head for all the ground the moon is shining on; nor would I let another do it, if I could help it. It's you that ought to be ashamed romancing in that way, when I only said I wasn't one bit worse nor yourself."

"Troth and bad enough you'd make me by your own account," said the lame man, recovering his courage by degrees; "and little I'm obliged to you for my character: I'm proud it's what nobody else would say of me, seeing I can defy the world to lay sin at my door."

"You're not in earnest, Dick: you know well enough what you are."

"And what am I? What sort of a brute baste would you make me? Tell me any one sin I ever committed since I was born."

"I'll tell you more," answered his companion: "I'll tell you that if your sins were turned into straws, they'd thatch all the cabins in the three parishes; if they were

melted into drops of water, they'd drown the church steeple."

They had now turned into the high road, and Dick was preparing himself to rebut this heavy charge, with a considerable degree of spirit, when a man on horseback called out, "Is that Dick Frayne I see limping before me?"

"I'm proud to see your Reverence well," said Dick, as Father Redmond rode up.

"Where was your son all yesterday?" inquired the Priest, without noticing his salutation.

"Och! sure your Reverence knows he was clearing Pat M^c Govran before the inquest, though others' words was taken before his, which was no blame to him."

"What did he do with the cock I trusted him to carry home last Sunday evening, after the cock-fight at Braggleswood?" asked the Priest.

"It's safe, Sir, and tended by Miles and my woman as if it was one of the childer :

I never seen a finer bird, and it does your Reverence a dale o' credit."

"Mind what I say to you," said the Priest: "let Miles bring that cock home to me by daylight in the morning, and if I find it a feather the worse by him, it will be the sorest job he ever done in his life."

"Never doubt it, your Reverence: Miles is as fond of it as if it was a Christian; and you'll say yourself, when you see it, that it's only the better for stopping with him. But, Father Redmond, here's a fellow has been abusing me for the worst under the sun, and putting more sin on me nor all the priests in Ireland could take off in Midsummer's Day; and what will I say to him to stop his mouth from belying me to the world?"

"What business," asked Father Redmond, "has the likes o' you to be talking of sin? Leave that to your betters, and them as knows about it. If I hear any more such discourse from any of my flock, I'll call

your names in the chapel, and give you a handling you won't forget soon."

"I never meddled with it before," said Dick, "and wouldn't now, only Andy begun it, and kep praching away like any minister, till I was in such a trimbling, that if you was to examine my side, I'm certain sure it's black and blue with all the thumps my heart gave agin it."

"Mr. Merry-Andrew," said the Priest, "for that ought to be your name, I'll stop your preaching: never trust me, but you'll rue some of your speeches. And you, you old fool," turning to Dick, "mind your own business. Go to the cock-fight to-morrow, and behave like another, as you ought. Mind that Miles is with me as early as ever he can be."

Andrew and his companion walked on for some minutes in silence after Father Redmond had galloped off, when Dick, at length, pointing to a woman who was walking at a quick pace before them, asked, "Do

you know who goes there, taking her evening walk? She is like an owl, afraid to show her face in the daylight."

Before Andrew could reply, three or four children, rushing from a cabin on the roadside, set up a loud shout, and began to sing in chorus a wretched ballad, set to a popular tune, purporting to be the confession of one who had sold herself to the devil, for the sake of eating meat on Fridays.

"They're a fine set of childer," Mrs. Grimes," said Dick to the mother, who was peeping through the half-closed door: "my blessing be on them; but they soon larned that song. Ah, he that wrote it has a strong lodging to-night; but he'll have a laugh at his enemies yet, I hope."

"Whisht, you noisy pack," said the mother, "and come in here to your beds: "if she turns upon yees, it's not this wake bit of a door would keep her out, once she claps her shoulder to it. She's a terrible woman, Mr. Frayne, when she's vexed."

The woman who was the subject of the ballad, however, walked on without noticing the shout or the song, when a coarse voice from behind a hedge on the opposite side of the road roared out lustily another stanza to the same tune. The poetry was not of a higher description than that chanted by the children, and the sentiments were grossly offensive. The aim of the unseen songster was soon accomplished. The woman suddenly stopped, and picking up a stone from the road, had raised her arm to fling it in the direction of the voice behind the hedge, when Andrew rushed up to her, and holding her arm, said, in a commanding tone, "Drop that stone, Biddy, I tell you. Will you bring more trouble on yourself by fighting and rising an uproar on the high road? What harm will their songs do you, if they were singing till their throats were dry?"

"Can't they let me walk the roads in peace?" said Biddy: "sure if I was a mad dog I couldn't get worse usage."

"If they won't let you alone do you let them alone," said Andy, "and they'll soon be tired when they see it don't vex you."

"It's asy to talk, Andy Britton," replied Biddy; "but you don't know what it is to have every one's tongue let loose upon you : to have all the bad in your heart kep ever alive with the unmannerly scornings I get from old and young."

"Take it asy, Biddy, take it asy, and it will be better for you," said Andy. "Don't you know you oughtn't to offend God because others has no manners."

"It's a pity," said Dick, who had by this time overtaken them : "it's a pity, Mrs. Mulhaul, that you don't folly the lady's advice she gave you when you were leaving the gaol last time,—not that I heard her ; never, I'm proud to say, having put my foot inside it, nor never will, I hope, though there's some thinks me bad enough for that or a worse place. But didn't Mrs. Ireton bid you think of a text out of the Testa-

ment she gave you when anybody riz your mind, and that *that* would settle it in no time."

"May be I folly that advice more nor you judge, Dick Frayne. If I didn't think of that Book, and if I didn't call to mind some of His words that speaks in it, what would ever hinder me from doing hurt to them that won't let me have the peace of the dumb brute that grazes by the road-side? What stopped me this minute from wishing harm or doing harm to them unlucky childer that Nelly Grimes set upon me, when the bad prayer was striving to rise to my mouth, and my feet was turning, whether I would or no, to revenge myself on them? What stopped me but the thought of Him who bore the jibes and the scornings of wicked men, when all the time He was innocent, and didn't deserve the treatment? I had consideration to give one look to Him, and then one look to myself, and so it quieted me; and I was trying to raise my heart in

a word of prayer for them and for myself, while their scoff was ringing in my ears."

"It was a good prayer, I'm sure, said Dick: "it soon put a stone into your hand to brain the poor boy, whoever he was, that was only divarting himself singing an innocent song behind the hedge there."

"How do *you* know anything about praying?" asked Andrew, "who never said a prayer in your life, if it wasn't a curse or a bad wish for yourself or others. Now, Biddy, let me just ask you, since it pleased you to leave the Romans, why don't you leave off some of their ways? Why don't you mind what the Book of the Holy One bids you, that is, to 'bless them that curse you'?"

"Andy Britton, I do it often; you may believe me, I do. You don't know all I hear. Sure they can tell that tries me every hour, how I pass by many a thing would have riz a storm long ago they'd be glad to run from."

"If you had stuck by the chapel you would have shunned all this," said Andrew ; "and seeing all the ill-will you got by so doing, it's likely you may take a thought one of these days, may be, and go back to your duty again."

"Do, Biddy girl," said Dick, eagerly ; "take his advice, and make your soul, that you thought so little about when you left the true church, to please them that lets you break your back carrying about sand to sell to all the dirty shoe-boys and kitchen-girls in the place. Not a soul will open their lips to offend you once you make up with the priest : and if you are afraid of Father Dennis horsewhipping you before he takes your submission, I'll answer for him he won't lift a hand to you. I'll go to him myself, and others will go to him, and will never leave off flattering him till he promises to put nothing on you but prayers and stations to Ballindona."

"Are *you* in earnest ?" said she to Andrew :

"is it *your* advice to me to go back to the chapel?"

"Why," said Andrew, "advising is one thing, and just talking to pass away the time is another. It came into my head that you were bad enough off in this world, and that you might like to get a lift by plasing the neighbours."

"And to be sure it would plase us all well," said Dick. "You know, Biddy, you was ever a fractious woman: now I don't want to offend you,—I'm only going to speak for your good. Well, you were always a little fractious, and sure enough you often let them into your house that was no credit to you; and sometimes you got a hard word from one or two cantankerous people, and to tell no lie, you gave as good as you got. But didn't you live in credibility? And wasn't I always civil to you, and others too, that wished to have no orations? Wouldn't the childer run away and hide themselves the minute your tongue was heard? Well,

go back to the religion you was born in, and that you lived in, and that you ought to die in, and you'll get the same respect you ever did afore, and we'll all quash the songs and the flings that vexes you."

"And give up your Testament," added Andrew; "and don't believe one word of what God says in His own Book, but take whatever the priest is pleased to give you; and leave Parson Leighton and his lecture at Philip Holmes's to-morrow evening, and be after Father Redmond to the cock-fight at Braggleswood: it's a pleasant walk, and will do you good, soul and body. Dick Frayne here will be proud to keep you company, and you can call on Nelly Grimes and her ballad singers as you are on the way."

"Whatever you mean," said Biddy Mulhaul, "I'll stay by the people that fears God, though some of them is jealous of me. I spent fifty-nine years among the others, and in all that time I never heard a word from one of them about religion that had

truth on the face of it. The priests didn't show me my sin : they often threatened and scolded and fought me hard ; and when I wouldn't please them by giving over my wicked ways, they left me there to go from bad to worse. I believe they would have made me better if they could ; but they didn't know the way. Did they ever tell me of the love of God ? Did they ever tell me that He sent His Son to die for sinners ? Did they ever tell me to look to Him, and to pray to God in His name ? No : but the others did, and showed me God's handwriting for it ; and a hope was planted in my heart, where nothing ever grew before but dread and awfulness ; and for His sake I gave up all I could of sin, and denied to stretch out my hand for its poor wages. Och ! I can't get sin out of my heart. I have the will to do what I ought, but I haven't the power. Sin often gets the better of me, in spite of myself, as it did now, when you stopped me doing

what I would be sorry for the minute after."

"That's the story the best has to tell, as well as you, Biddy," said Andrew: "you have no worse heart to give you uneasiness nor this man, nor myself; and if"—

"I'll make a short cut by this gap," said Dick Frayne, hopping into the ditch, and clambering up the other side, "though I ought to be loath to quit such good company: but I was ever a man that kep myself from sin; and by your own account, you two have so much of it about ye, that it's best to keep a distance with you."

"Good night, Dick," said Andrew; "and I hope you'll meet no worse at the cock-fight to-morrow."

"You may as well be off too," said Biddy Mulhaul; "the less you are seen with the likes o' me the better. There's talk about you in the country, from the way you have been speaking; and if you ever quit the

Romans, it would do you no credit to have it said that I had any hand in it."

"If I ever quit them," he replied, "it's little I'll care what they say. I'm not one to be put down by a word or a knock; and it's hard to say what a man may do when he gets strength and courage from Him that is able to give it. I have a heedless way with me, but there's more thought in my heart nor many guesses, Biddy. All is not cleared up to my mind yet, so it's no wonder I'm doubtful betimes. Say nothing about it to the neighbours, and never even to myself again; for all the talk of man won't move me: it's One far above them can do anything with me. Good night to you, Biddy, and God's blessing be with you. Take care of yourself, girl, and don't be offending Him only to give pleasure to His enemies."



CHAPTER VIII.

DUNAMOYLE FARM-HOUSE.

MR. Eyrebury's refusal to apply to Government for a commutation of the sentence passed on M'Govran and his associates was resented by Bishop Mac Royster as an affront to himself. Being naturally of an imperious spirit, he could ill brook contradiction, especially from one of whose understanding he had so mean an opinion, and over whom he had conceived his influence to be unbounded; and while smarting under the annoyances of a private nature which we have related, he manifested an amount of petulance and irritation for which Mr. Eyrebury was totally unprepared. Mr. Eyrebury was, on the

other hand, balancing in his own mind whether he should be offended at the Bishop's manifest attempt to dictate to him, when Mr. Goldtrap's unmeasured abuse of the Bishop determined him to put the most favourable construction on the conduct of the latter. He found an excuse for his waywardness in the supposition that benevolence towards the condemned men, had for a time influenced his usually sound judgment.

Mr. Goldtrap had never been a favourite with his employer. As a man of business he was faultless ; but he was noisy, vulgar, and dictatorial,—always attempting to play the great man, and so repulsively familiar, that Mr. Eyrebury had, from the commencement of their acquaintance, felt an invincible propensity to act in opposition to him. The Bishop had taken advantage of this antipathy to gain favours for one or two of the tenants, who had, by their ill conduct, incurred the displeasure of the agent ; and just before the affair of Moyallart he had been straining

every nerve in behalf of a certain Gilbert Foy, who, in the usual phraseology of the Irish tenant, "expected" a small abatement of rent, in consideration of sundry improvements in his house and farm, which the late landlord had promised to allow for. Mr. Goldtrap resisted the claims, denied the existence of the improvements, denied the promise, and advised, or rather insisted, that Mr. Eyrebury should make no abatement in the rent.

The Bishop could not specify what the improvements were, but he positively declared that Foy had expended a considerable sum on the farm, and he had always understood that a promise had been given by the late landlord, but what the precise nature of the promise was he was not prepared to say. Goldtrap protested that Gilbert Foy was an arrant old rogue and an ill-conducted fellow. The Bishop represented him as an honest, industrious, respectable man. Many considerations weighed with Mr. Eyrebury

to lean in this one instance to the opinion of his agent ; but when he mentioned that in addition to his other misdemeanours, Foy was married to the Bishop's first cousin, Mr. Eyrebury thought he had discovered the true cause of Goldtrap's dislike to the man, and therefore resolved to inquire carefully into the circumstances of his case, and to realise the "expectation," if there was any ground for it.

With a good deal of magnanimity, he chose a time for carrying his design into execution, when the Bishop was in his very worst humour, having in the course of ten days refused three invitations to Croom Castle, without qualifying his refusal by telling any of those civil lies which are current in good society. Accordingly, on the fair day of Derryvannan, when he was pretty sure of not being joined by Goldtrap on the way, he proceeded, in company with his sister, to inspect the farm at Dunamoyle, and to ascertain for himself whether

the Bishop's statements were to be relied upon.

Dunamoyle was an old-fashioned house, sadly gone to decay; but still exhibiting some marks of having been at one time inhabited by persons in a higher rank of life than that of the present tenants. It stood in a square court, enclosed by high walls. In front were the remains of two handsome piers, one of them still surmounted by an eagle, with outstretched wings. Though the court was tolerably large, yet from the gateway (for there was no gate) to the hall-door there was scarcely room for a car to pass. A huge manure heap occupied one side of the court, and a range of turf-stacks filled up the other, the narrow intervening space being left as an approach to the door of the house.

The arrival of the squire of Croom Castle and his sister caused no little commotion amongst the inmates of Dunamoyle farm. Turkeys, geese, ducks, chickens, pigs, and

calves poured in rapid succession from the open hall-door, being pushed, pelted, and scolded out by a young girl, assisted by two ragged boys; whilst behind them appeared Mrs. Foy, in a lavender poplin dress, lace cap, and white pocket handkerchief in her hand. With many apologies to her visitors for their finding the place in so "unreadied" a condition, she ushered them into the parlour; first screaming to the maid and to half-a-dozen other persons in the kitchen to go and look for their master as fast as their legs could carry them.

The inside of the farm-house was quite of a piece with the outside. The room into which the Eyreburys were shown was large, dark, and low. The paper, which had once been handsome, was torn off in many places, and the walls ornamented with pictures of saints, in flaring colours, some fastened with a pin, others pasted, without any attempt at arrangement. A small oval looking-glass, covered with cobwebs and peacocks' feathers,

occupied a conspicuous position in the room ; and the never-to-be-dispensed-with corner cupboard displayed a motley collection of jugs, mugs, glasses, and mustard-pots. A number of large, rickety, mahogany chairs, which had once been covered with horse-hair cloth, fastened with brass nails, were ranged along the wall. The floor was uncarpeted, and in a condition far from clean, as mats or scrapers were luxuries never indulged in at Dunamoyle. The marble chimney-piece was tottering to its fall, and the half of the hearthstone had disappeared. In striking contrast to all this disorder and dirt stood Mrs. Foy, in her poplin dress and lace cap. Presently she seated herself at a mahogany table, thickly smeared with bees-wax, on which was placed a tea-tray, resplendent with scarlet and gold, containing cups and saucers, of various colours, shapes, and sizes ; a small silver cream-ewer, a portly metal teapot, and two bowls, well filled with white and brown sugar.

Mrs. Foy was evidently a good deal embarrassed by the visit of the squire and lady of Croom Castle ; and her embarrassment, instead of making her awkwardly silent, made her talk at random, and with such a rapid utterance, that it was long before Mr. Eyrebury got an opportunity of explaining the object of his visit.

“ I am sorry you had the trouble of coming so far,” said she ; “ he could have explained it all to you at the Castle just as well. He stepped out the minute he tuk his dinner, and where he went I know no more than your baste there without. He may be ever so far off, only I don't think he is. He'll be positively back in a minute, though he sometimes saunters about till one is wary expecting him. Would you, dear,” speaking to a sickly-looking girl who was sitting in the parlour ; “ would you step into your room, and watch him out of the windy, and shout to him the minute you see him ? ”

“ You forget,” replied the young person

thus addressed, "that there is no view from my window ; the garden wall rises so high exactly in front."

"But the passage between : he's ever up and down that passage. There's no place so likely for him to be in as that passage. Be quick, or you may lose him ; and call to me the minute you see him."

The girl left the room, and Mrs. Foy continued : "He'll be for ever obliged to you, Sir, for coming after him, and I wouldn't wonder if he took sick with the disappointment when he misses you." Then calling to the maid, who was seen entering the hall-door, "Augusteen, did you see the master yet?"

"No!" answered Augusteen, in not the most respectful tone : "it would be hard to see any one who is two miles the other side of Crookmore by this time."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Eyrebury, getting in a word at last, "in the absence of your husband you could point out some of those

improvements for which he expects a reduction of rent."

"Improvements, Sir! there's more of them nor I can remember in a hurry. Oh, if you had seen the place when we come to it, seventeen years ago: he had to pull down three bedrooms at the back that was no use at all, and a brewhouse, and ever so many things of that kind. He had to reclaim better nor two acres of a garden; and sure, Sir, that was out-o-the-way for a man like him. Then the place was crammed up with hedges and big holly-trees, that kep the air from blowing; and there was a gravel walk for as good as half a mile round a scrubbery; and it cost him handfuls to get shut of them and make the place any way dacent."

"I had been led to suppose," said the landlord, "that he had built a range of offices."

"He built, Sir, till he was tired. I could show you a shed for the cows that cost

him what he couldn't well spare, and costs him expense every year with thatching it; and he was talking of building a barn, for the old one fell in last year with the rain that rotted the timber: there was no keeping it out, though he often stuffed straw into the holes where the slates blew off; it was a bad take for him: it racked him quite, and tuk all our little substance improving it. I'm quite ashamed, Sir, to keep you waiting, and no signs of my man coming at all. Augusteen M^cManus—do you hear, Augusteen? Run like a good girl to the lime-kiln, and if you see anybody coming tell them the master isn't in the place, and that the quality from Croom are here looking for him, and that there's time enough for anything he's doing now, and to come at once. He'll break his heart, Sir, I know to think how he had the bad luck to be out of the way, when you had the trouble of coming so far. But maybe, Miss," addressing Miss Eyrebury, "you'll take

something after your ride : a cup of tea or a glass of wine. I forgot my manners thinking of Gibby's ill-luck. Augusteen, a'nt you gone yet ?—Didn't you hear me, girl ? I'll get you a glass of wine, Miss, and a bit of bread and butter, in one minute.

Miss Eyrebury, politely declined the wine, but took a cup of tea ; her brother did the same : then, as they both perceived that Mrs. Foy's agitation was increasing every moment, and would soon become quite distressing, they took their leave, Mr. Eyrebury desiring her to inform her husband that he would see him soon, and talk to him on the subject of the improvements made at Dunamoyle.

When the squire and his sister were out of sight, Mrs. Foy vented her wrath on Augusteen, and the rest of her household, for not giving her notice of the approach of the gentle-folk, that she might have slipped out of the way. The servants bore the scolding with great unconcern, as a

matter of too frequent occurrence to be thought much of. No one made any apology, or thought of replying, except Augusteen, who, swinging off a large pot of potatoes from the fire with a pair of pot-hooks, remarked that "she never set up for having more nor two eyes ; and if people could get girls with three or four, she was ready to give up her place to them that very minute : it was no inheritance to be troubling one's self about it."

The mistress, perfectly aware of the oratorical powers of her maid, if she was once set a-going, did not condescend to notice her soliloquy, but returned to the parlour, where she sat recovering herself for some minutes before she relieved the young person who was still on the watch at the back window. "You may come out now," she said : "they are gone, and we can have the place to ourselves again. Wasn't it lucky that you took my advice and dressed yourself? I told you there was no knowing

who might call and take a cup of tea after the fair. Though we live in a quiet place, there's many coming and going."

"Do you expect any one this evening?" asked the girl, with an anxious expression.

"There's no knowing," replied Mrs. Foy, "who may pop in. You see the Croom people came without me expecting them, and others may do the same; so it's good to be ready. But we have an hour to ourselves before any one will come, and I want to have a little chat with you now, not having a spare minute since you came last night. First of all, I must say how much obliged I am to you for coming at the first asking, and so is Gibby, who was as willing to have you as myself."

"I was glad to come," said the other: "your letter was so friendly; and I have not been used to get a word of kindness lately from my nearest friend."

"I couldn't be other nor kind to your mother's daughter," said Mrs. Foy, putting

her white pocket handkerchief to her eyes. "Wasn't she my own first cousin, that I loved the best in the world? and didn't I close her eyes, and promised to look after her only child? It was she made the fine ending: heavens be her bed! And what trouble and sorrow must she feel now, when she knows what a hand you've gone and made of yourself!"

"Remember," said the young person, mildly, "that you promised if I came to you never to mention that to me."

"I'm not going to say one word about it; but I can't help grieving when I think of your mother's soul—what a way it's in. I'll only ask you, Agnes dear, after all you have gone through, is your mind still steady to keep by the Protestants, and to leave the Church in which all your forefathers lived and died?"

"Yes," answered Agnes; for, as the reader may have guessed, the young person was no other than Agnes Murphy. "If more

is put upon me," continued Agnes, "I must go through with it: I could not change my mind if they killed me."

Mrs. Foy crossed herself, and was unable to speak for some seconds. At length she said, "Well, I promised to say nothing about it, and I'll keep my word. Oh, isn't your mother a happy woman to be dead before she lived to see this day! But now that your friends have cast you off, what will you do to live? You couldn't earn your bread by your needle?"

"No: I never knew anything of sewing, except working my sampler long ago; and besides, this arm is almost useless to me. I have recommendations to some ladies in Dublin, who will get me into a place where young women are taught to be schoolmistresses, and I hope to support myself in that way, when I learn the method of teaching."

"A schoolmistress!" exclaimed Mrs. Foy, "with the fine education you got, to turn

schoolmistress ! Oh, Agnes, what have you brought yourself to ? You that was at a dancing-school, and can draw as beautiful pictures as any of them on the wall, and can play tunes on the pianna, and do everything that is genteel, would you disgrace yourself, and all belonging to you, by turning schoolmistress ? It would be something if you went tutoress into a lord's family ; but to larn a parcel of dirty brats, och ! I never thought half so bad of the Protestants afore, if that's all they'll do for you after ruining yourself to please them."

"Indeed, Mrs. Foy, I'm not fitted for a high station : I know nothing. The schooling I got was not of much use to me. Many poor Sunday-school children can read and spell better than I do."

"Not at all ; not at all," replied Mrs. Foy : "it's the Protestants put that into your head, to make their gains of you : you spell beautifully. I remarked how some of your words was spelt,—just as I put them

down in my letter ; and I'd be glad to know who got better larning nor myself. Oh, your poor mother, and that holy man the Bishop ! Well, well : now, supposing your health fails you,—and you are looking bad enough, I can tell you,—what will you do then ? ”

“ I don't know,” said Agnes : “ I can only trust to Him for whom I have borne the loss of all things, to support me, if health and friends and all go.”

“ Oh, Agnes, Agnes, what have you reduced yourself to, to have no better hope before you ? You that might never be under a compliment to this world or the next for a living, if you had only minded yourself. It's your mother I'm fretting about ; she that was a woman,—well : but you never said a word to me about the schoolmaster you liked in Tipperary. Was it he put you up to learn his trade ? ”

“ I never heard of any such person,” said Agnes : “ they wanted me to marry two or

three men that I never saw ; and I believe there was a plan to let me be carried off in the night. Oh, Mrs. Foy, I was cruelly treated by my father's people, and by others, before I was sent to them."

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Foy, "it was all done for your good ; and one can't be angry with them as only wishes for one's good. I was as bad as another when I heard of the fashion you was follying. I cried night and day, always reflecting upon your mother ; but after I heard they were going to crossness with you, and that you was getting into fits, and convulsions, and spitting blood, and losing your health, I wouldn't be put off, but kep pestering the Bishop till he allowed me to write to you about coming here, and just to try what letting you alone entirely would do. 'I would,' says I to him, 'walk on my bare knees from this to Jamaica, if it would bring her back to the true Church ; but if she won't be advised, the misfortune is all her own, and we oughtn't to put more on her.'"

"I'm thankful to you, Mrs. Foy," said the poor girl, wiping away the tears which fell fast on her lap: "all I wanted from any of my people was to cast me in peace upon the world, if they wouldn't tolerate me in their company after they knew my mind was changed; but they would not let me alone. I was watched and dogged and locked up; I was cursed and beaten and frightened out of my senses; I had words put into my mouth which I never said, and things laid to my charge that I would not take the world to do. For the last five months I can safely say that I never stretched myself on a bed that I didn't wish it was my coffin; and in that time I never saw the face, but yours, that didn't frown upon me."

"It's all over now, dear; so keep up your spirits, and be what you used to be before them notions came into your head: if it wasn't for them you would never be the trembling, shaking, poor creature that you

are. Sure I remember when your aunt and uncle would be afraid to open their lips to you, from the tearing passions you would be in. However, I'm proud there's no truth in the schoolmaster with his lame leg, as they'd have had us believe: and then there is another will dance for joy when he hears how you haven't forgot the words that passed between you."

"If you mean Mr. Kilbride," said Agnes, "he is nothing to me now. He would be sorry to be put in mind of me when I am without a penny or a friend in the world."

"No such thing at all," replied Mrs. Foy; "it isn't passing three days that he told me with his own lips, how he would marry you if you hadn't a shoe to your foot."

Agnes trembled with agitation. "They told me," said she, "that he was far away in England, matching himself with a girl there. They told me he would not return to this country any more. Oh, I am never to hear a word of truth again! Oh, Mrs.

Foy, sure you, who say you had such a love for my mother, will not join in persecuting her poor child."

"What a way you are in, and all for nothing at all," said Mrs. Foy, crossly. "None of your people was ever given to tell lies; and if they said he was in England, they said true; for the boy was there, and only come back about a week ago. It's a pity of him, so it is, the way he's in. The first place he called to was this house; and for a full hour he did nothing but talk of you, and said you was book-sworn to him; and that all the uncles and bishops wouldn't keep you from him, when he had your own consent. And what would you have me to do to a genteel young man who was only praising my first cousin's daughter? Sure I wasn't your enemy, if I didn't behave unmannerly to him, what I couldn't do to a cat or a dog, if they spoke to me in civility."

"I never was book-sworn to him," said

Agnes : " I never said more than that I was willing to marry him, if my uncles thought well of it ; but I could not say that now. If they all gave their consent, he never could be more to me than he is at present."

" Poor young man !" ejaculated Mrs. Foy ; " he deserves a milder word nor that from you ; for he dotes upon the very ground you walk on. Poor boy ! I wish he took the girl was offered him in England, with fifteen hundred pounds to her portion, and leave you to any limping fellow you might cast an eye upon, since that is your fancy."

" Do you think he will come here while I am in the place ?" asked Agnes, turning deadly pale. " Have you any reason to expect him here this evening ?"

" How do I know who will be here, or who won't be here ?" replied Mrs. Foy ; there's many coming and going. Gibby may bring home anybody to his own house he pleases, without asking leave from them as has no business to meddle with what don't

belong to them. And supposing young Mr. Kilbride might drop in by accident, what harm will it do any of us to be civil and agreeable? How was I to guess you'd take umbrage at him, when it isn't a year and a half all out that you was running into his mouth, and breaking the hearts of the tender people that had the rearing of you, you was so set on him?"

"I was foolish,—I know I was," said Agnes. "I confessed to you that I would have married him then; but they made me promise against his company, and put a curse upon me if I thought of him any more. Since then my own mind is changed, more changed than you would believe, and it would be sin in me to marry Mr. Kilbride."

"There's no knowing you girls," said Mrs. Foy, laughing immoderately. "Never believe me, if I didn't think you mislike the boy, and scouted him for love of another; but I see how it is plain. Oh, Agnes dear, if there's nothing stands between you and

Bartley, barring sin, the business is soon settled. Never heed the promises or the curses ; you'll soon be cleared from all that : I'd make the country too hot for the Bishop, great man as he is, if he left you under any disparagement after you marrying a responsible young man out of my house. Well, to be sure, I'm as glad as if I found a ten pound bank-note, that your mind is still steady to him that's true to you. It's a long time since I was at a wedding, and my name isn't Anastasia Foy if it won't be a merry one."

"Oh, Mrs. Foy," said Agnes, taking her hand, and weeping bitterly, "don't be angry with me ; but I have met with such usage, and so many traps have been laid for me, that I am easily frightened, and I don't know whom to trust. Sure you won't deceive me ; for I put confidence in you by coming to you when the magistrate who took me from my cousin's house had provided a decent lodging for me, where I was

safe from persecution, till I was well enough to go to Dublin, under the guard of them who would take care of me. Your letter was so kind and friendly in its wording, that it went home to my heart; and though I hadn't seen you from the time I was a child, still I preferred being awhile with one of my own to living upon the bounty of strangers altogether. I was warned that mischief might befall me through your means; but I read your letter again and again, and I thought you could not mean to be unkind. So here I am in your power, and if you fail me, why God protect me and forgive you.—Who's that?" cried she, almost screaming with terror, and pointing to a man who that moment rode into the court.


"They had a heavy handful of you, I'm sure," said Mrs. Foy, holding her down on her chair, "if this was the way you got on with them in Tipperary. Sit quiet there, and don't make a show of yourself and me

to the gentleman. It's only young Father Redmond, curate to Father Dennis Molony, that sometimes calls to take a cup of tea, or may be a glass of punch. He's a heavenly-minded young man, and one that won't say a word to you, good or bad, if you make no disturbance. Oh, you'll not go into your room; I'll lock the door: nobody in my house shall be hiding in holes and corners, as if they was frightful at their own shadow. Don't disgrace me, and the people you come of, by any of your Protestant tricks. Stop your trembling and quaking, and look like a Christian, and not like a stray gander: there's nothing meant, but only for your good."

The priest here entered the room, and almost as soon as he had shaken hands with Mrs. Foy, bowed to Agnes, and taken a seat, the master of the house entered, followed by Bartholomew Kilbride.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONSPIRACY.

HE meeting between Miss Murphy and her former lover was less agitating to both parties, at least so far as outward appearances went, than might have been expected, after the scene related in the last chapter.

In fact the poor girl was at times almost insensible to what was passing around her ; and was only saved from falling into hysterics through fear of Mrs. Foy, who scowled at her from time to time with a look that took away her breath ; whilst Mr. Kilbride sought relief from the awkwardness of his situation by attempting to assist Augusteen in handing the tea-kettle, to the imminent peril of Mrs. Foy's lavender poplin.

Mrs. Foy herself was not quite at her ease. She travelled first from the tea-table to the cupboard, and then back again. She first looked for a knife, then for another, then for a plate or spoon; then she talked to herself, joked with the priest, ordered her husband about, and apologized to Kilbride for asking him to hand the kettle. Whilst the party were at tea, she so far recovered herself as to be able to give an account of the pleasant visit she had from the Eyreburys, to tell how civil he was, and how willing to consider the heavy expenses connected with the improvement of Dunamoyle, and to make a liberal allowance for those improvements.

"The sister," she continued, "is but a mean-looking body, in spite of her beautiful dress and fine gold chain. She sat staring about her as if the room had seven heads, and when I offered her a glass of wine you would think it was poison I wanted to give her, she got up in such a hurry saying, she

never drunk wine of a morning, and it growing dark at the time. She has the name of being near, and I am sure she deserves it; for all the time he was talking so generous not a word of encouragement did he get from her, though he kept looking at her the whole time."

Mrs. Foy had all the conversation to herself; for with the exception of a forced laugh, or an attempt at wit now and then from Father Redmond, hardly a sound was heard from any one at the table. Gilbert Foy was at best a man of few words. He had a sullen, reserved look, and his naturally dark brow became darker than ever as the evening advanced. Mr. Kilbride, when not busy handing the tea-kettle, drank cup after cup of tea, until he had consumed eight, accompanying them with thick slices of bread and butter. Agnes mechanically took what was set before her, without raising her eyes or appearing conscious of the presence of any one, unless she was roused by a

question from Mrs. Foy, who spoke to her every now and then in a loud tone of authority.

The tea-pot was at last drained of its last drop. Augusteen was summoned to clear the table, and Bartley Kilbride again fidgeted about and tried to assist the maid, although repeatedly besought by the mistress not to trouble himself, but to let the girl, who hadn't half enough work to do, "ready the place by herself."

When Augusteen had made her final exit an awkward silence ensued, which not even Mrs. Foy appeared to have courage enough to break. A sort of dumb show, carried on through the medium of winks and nods between her and the priest, was kept up for some minutes, until each seemed thoroughly to comprehend the other.

"Gibby," said she; at last to her husband, "Why don't you look out the pack of cards in the drawer? Father Redmond likes a game of five and forty; and we'll all take a

hand to keep up our spirits ; for whatever is come over us, we are as bad company as ever I'd wish to see."

"Have you no better entertainment for a young couple but a game of cards?" asked the priest, in a sportive tone. "I thought, Mrs. Foy, you, of all others, would do as you would be done by."

"Oh, as to things of that matter," answered Mrs. Foy, in the same tone, "I leave them to gentlemen of your own cloth to settle! I was doing my best just before you come in, and to my mind there's no delay, if your Reverence would do the job at once."

"I'm always ready to do good to my neighbours," said the Priest; "and what could I do better nor make two people happy, when all they want is to have a few words read over them : so there's no time to be lost, since all parties is agreed."

He looked at Kilbride, who had been crossing and re-crossing his legs for the last

quarter of an hour, and now began to tug at his pocket for his handkerchief, but without venturing either to look at Agnes or to speak, though pushed and pinched by Gilbert, who sat next to him.

"Why, Mr. Kilbride," said Father Redmond, "you're over modest; or is it an English fashion you learned in your travels, and that you want to bring up among us, to make the lady speak first? But I won't allow it at all: we are all true Irish here, and I won't let Miss Murphy open her lips in your favour till you draw it from her yourself."

"Miss Murphy has known long enough," said Kilbride, in a listless tone, "that she has my good wish; and I had reason to think once that I had her's too."

"And so you have," cried Mrs. Foy: "she told me this minute that she was forced to swear agin you by her uncle Kit, while all the time she was positive to have her own way; and I like her spirit, and so I'll say

to the first in the family. Now you, Father Redmond, knows how asy it will be to make her people agreeable, so it's a pity to be losing time when there's nothing to hinder them being married this minute. Father Redmond, blessings on you for coming here this evening without me expecting you, or guessing what would turn out! It's a joyful hour to me, that loved her mother better, as I often tould him, nor Gibby himself. But, Mr. Kilbride, sure you ought to welcome her in a more friendly way, when she come so far to meet you: us ladies always expects a little civility from a lover."

Kilbride, thus encouraged, hastily wiped his mouth with his pocket-handkerchief, which had been frequently in requisition during the evening, and was advancing to salute Agnes, when she stood up.

"Mr. Kilbride," said she, "don't you see that these people are making their own amusement out of us? and though you may

have spirit to join in the sport, I have not. Since we last met my health has quite left me; and you may see that I am a poor object, fitter for my grave than for merry-making."

Kilbride drew back.

"Look at the fellow," said the Priest, laughing loudly: "when she gets up to meet him half way, he lets her stand there ashamed of herself before us all."

"Troth, Mr. Kilbride," said Mrs. Foy, when she saw him still hesitating, "you are the most backward man I ever seen, considering the encouragement you got."

Agnes, who had resumed her seat again, rose and retreated behind a chair, as Kilbride was pushed towards her by Gilbert Foy. "I would fain believe," said she, "that you are only in jest, though it would not be a friendly turn in any one here to find their pleasure in laughing at the like of me, whose heart is cast down with sickness and sorrow; but if you are in earnest, it is taking trouble

to no end : neither one nor the other would thank you for meddling. Perhaps you do not know, Mr. Kilbride, that times are altered with me since our acquaintance first began : then I had the name of a fortune, and expectations besides ; now I am dependent on the charity of strangers, till I am put in a way to earn my bread by my own labour, and no chance of things being ever better with me in this world."

"Miss Murphy," said Father Redmond, "you are not fair to your uncle the Bishop, when you talk in that way. Your friends, and he in particular, were willing to be what they always were to you, till you chose to go among strangers of your own accord ; and even after vexing them as you have done, the Bishop can't bear to be at strife with you, and he is willing to give you to Mr. Kilbride, since you are bent upon the match. Moreover, to prove how you wrong him, instead of the seven hundred pounds he promised you on the day of your

marriage, he has passed his bond for twelve hundred, to be paid down the moment my handwriting certifies to him that Mr. Kilbride and you are man and wife."

"He's a heavenly man, I'll say that for him, though he is my own first cousin," cried Mrs. Foy: "and Agnes, dear, what a proud woman you are to have such a look out before you!"

"You know, Miss Murphy," said the Priest, "that you'll have to confess to me before I tie the knot; but I'll not keep you long, nor be over-particular with you or the groom, seeing it's getting late. It's all a matter of form, so you needn't be frightened."

"You can go into that room," said Mrs. Foy; "here's the key: and Father Redmond, dear, don't be too grave and serious on a joyful occasion. You are a man that loves a little innocence and merriment in your heart; so let us have it all done as soon and as pleasantly as it can."

Agnes's breathing grew short and quick.

She made two or three attempts to speak ; but no sound would come from her white and quivering lips. She at length sat down, the picture of misery and helplessness.

"Lean on me, Agnes dear," said Mrs. Foy, and don't be terrorized at confessing to Father Redmond, he being a stranger. Try to walk, and you'll soon get over the tremor. I remember, and you remember too, Gibby, that I was twice as bad when I was going to be married."

Agnes shrank from the officious kindness of her hostess ; and after gazing at every face in the room, as if hoping to see a relenting expression in any of them, she hastily approached Kilbride, and taking him by the arm, said : " You once had some regard for me ; that is, you said you had ; and I now ask you to protect me from the wickedness that is plotting against me in this house."

"I can stand it no longer," exclaimed Mrs. Foy, "to be made a fool of at this rate. What brought you to this house only to

throw yourself in the way of this gentleman? What made you tell me, not passing three hours ago, that you still had the same mind for him you ever had?"

"Indeed, Mr. Kilbride," said Agnes, without noticing Mrs. Foy's remark, "I thought you were in another country: if I had known you were here, I would have run to the world's end sooner than meet you. Don't be displeased, for I wish you well, but I couldn't marry you. There is a wall between us that no living hand can pull down. We do not worship God in the same way. I have renounced the religion in which I was reared, and which you think the only true one: if we were married how could we be happy, if there were not perfect agreement on the subject of religion?"

"That bangs all I ever heard," said the priest. "I was told she was only wanting to be a Protestant, but by her own account she is a downright atheist: why she says she don't worship God!"

"No, no, Sir; I did not say that. I do worship God; but I cannot join in the services of the Church to which you belong. If the Bible be true you are all wrong, and I could not trust my soul among you."

Stop her mouth," cried Mrs. Foy; "and don't let her bring a curse on my house with her wicked Protestant words. If she got the treatment she deserves it isn't married she should be, but made to do penance till she comes round."

"What is to be done with her?" asked Gilbert Foy, in his drawling, discordant voice, which sounded in Agnes' ears like her death-knell.

"There's no doubt about it," answered Father Redmond, "that it is your duty, Mr. Kilbride, to save this unfortunate girl from destruction. It's your duty, as a good Christian, to reclaim her to her proper senses, and if it can't be done by fair means, why it must be done by other means. Mind what I am saying, Miss Murphy: I have

authority from your uncle, the Bishop, to marry you this night to Mr. Kilbride there ; and if you don't consent I'll do it against your will, and take all the responsibility on myself."

"What will become of me ?" cried Agnes, pressing her hand against her forehead. "If my senses leave me what will I do?—what will become of me? But while I have my senses let me warn you," addressing herself to Kilbride, "not to do by wicked means what would bow you to the ground with shame and confusion ever after. Let me go : all I ask is that you will bid them open that door and let me out into the darkness to make my own way in the world, and I will bless you and bless them, and never reflect upon you to your miscredit, or blame you to God or man."

"We've all been in the wrong box, I see," said Father Redmond in a hurry, lest Kilbride should speak. "We are fools not to know that young girls won't speak their

minds freely before company. She's coming round, only for bashfulness, and if they are five minutes alone together, he'll persuade her sooner nor if we were talking till doomsday. Out with you, Mr. Foy: that face you have on you is enough to hinder her from saying anything that is pleasant. Mrs. Foy, we'll all step into the kitchen for a little, and let them settle it between themselves."

The trio left the room immediately, and Bartley Kilbride, relieved by their absence, began to speak at once without embarrassment.

"Miss Agnes, said he, "I can't make out the way you go on. When you were in credit and grandeur you gave me a hearing, and were well inclined to me when your friends were not for it; and now, when everybody has come round to be agreeable, you have a manner as if I was as bad as the worst."

"You know, Mr. Kilbride," replied Agnes,

“that it was all over between us long ago. When my uncles threatened to take their friendship from me, and showed me anger and ill-will for your sake—though nothing like what came upon me afterwards—I was persuaded to give you up : and I may say to you now, it was long before I would give the promise. You, however, seemed very willing to give me up, and you left the country, satisfied in your mind, I suppose, that it was better we should be strangers to one another.”

“I only quitted the place to put them off their guard,” answered Kilbride. “I never lost sight of you or thought of any one else, if that rises your mind against me ; and there must be something of that in it, or you wouldn’t stand out against their good wishes to me now.”

“They have no good wishes either for you or for me, Mr. Kilbride,” said Agnes. “They would move the world to make me go back to their religion ; and if they did not think

you were the likeliest to bring that about, they would have pitched upon another in preference to you. But it cannot be ; indeed it cannot : there's more against it than all this world can remove."

"It never was anything good," said Bartley Kilbride, "that put it into your mind to break your promise with me. I am sure some swaddling fellow has been filling your head with fancies, putting between us for his own ends."

"No, Bartley," replied Agnes ; "I never spoke to a Protestant man or woman about what was passing in my mind : I found all out for myself, in the book where God tells His people how they ought to serve Him."

"I'll never meddle with your religion, Agnes," said Bartley. "Listen to me," lowering his voice to a whisper. "You had better marry me ; it's the only way to escape persecution : if you don't, there's worse prepared for you. You are in the hands of devils that would put a man up to

anything ; for they offer money, and that's hard to resist when a man knows the value of it. The whole country is joined with them, and you can no more escape than the tethered cow can graze at liberty. With me you will be free as air. Your fortune once paid, I'll join you in laughing at them. I'll drive you to the church in your own car the Sunday after ; or if you are fearful of their faction, I'll take you to live in England, where you can choose out of a hundred religions the one you like best. Why, I'm only a Roman on the outside ! I keep it up just not to get the ill will of them that would injure me. I care little for any religion, not seeing what good it does ; and I'd join which I got most by."

"Bartley, every word you say tells more and more against my marrying you," said Agnes. "Don't you make my lot more sorrowful than it is ; and for the sake of pity leave it to others to harass me, if nothing else will satisfy them. I thank

you over and over again for your friendliness and good wishes to me, Mr. Kilbride ; and while I live, I will think of you with kindness, and pray for your good in this world and the next."

"You'll get no more trouble by me, Miss Agnes," said Bartley, in reply ; "and all I hope is, that you may be quit of it from others. I never meant anything but in friendship, and I was prepared to expect the same thing from you ; but let that pass with the rest. I don't want to leave you in unkindness, since you speak so obliging ; so just give me your hand in token of friendship at parting. I'll never ask more from you the longest hour I have to live, and"—

At this moment the door flew open, and Mrs. Foy entered, clapping her hands with joy. "I knew," she exclaimed, "that all that was wanting was to know one another's mind ; and I'm proud to see that you won't let a little jealousy put between you. Father Redmond, you may come in now ; the busi-

ness is settled : they have got their consent, and there is no hindrance in life."

"No such thing at all," said Bartley, pettishly. "You may just at once give over your intendings. You know her mind was not set on me, but quite the contrary ; and what use is your good will when she tells me to the face she won't have me ? So I'll stay no longer among you, to be only made a laughing stock for you all."

"By all the books that ever was shut and opened," said Mrs. Foy, pulling him back as he turned to leave the room, "she told me this very night that she'd marry you in spite of the world ; the only drawback was, a report about a girl in England, that she stomached at. She said she would show you an altered countenance to the very last, to try whether you was true-hearted, and had spirit to bear a little fractiousness when it was all out of love : she can't deny it, and she standing there. She just takes after her mother, that was the same head-

strong woman, out and out, to the day of her death. Do you think I would tell a lie before a holy man like Father Redmond Garraghan ? ”

“ Ten minutes reading from me,” said the Priest, “ will put into your pocket, Bartley, twelve hundred pounds. Wait till to-morrow, and you may wait long enough till it is offered to you again.”

“ There will be no waiting,” cried Mrs. Foy ; “ it must and it shall be done this minute. None of your tricks in my house,” looking furiously at Agnes ; “ I will do you goodness against your will. I have vowed a vow that your soul shall not be lost ; I have laid a curse on myself that I’ll see you safe with a Christian husband. I promised the Bishop to have it done, no matter how it was done. Father Redmond, his orders is upon you too, and you’re over slow in obeying them.”

Agnes again appealed to Kilbride. “ Their wickedness,” said she, “ must stop if you

refuse to join them in it. Your word is passed to me; and sure you won't go back from it?"

"I didn't speak before," said Gilbert Foy, coming forwards, "but now I'll speak to some purpose. Come along here," dragging Agnes by the arm, which had been dislocated under the gentle correction of her uncle Kit; and adding, with a tremendous oath, "If the sun doesn't rise upon you to-morrow as Bartley Kilbride's wife, you will only have it shine upon your corpse."

"You've made a corpse of her already, you brute!" exclaimed Bartley, as the poor girl, groaning with pain and terror, fell fainting to the ground.

"It's nothing but by way of a faint," said Mrs. Foy: "she'll come to in no time. If I had a little water to sprinkle on her face"—

"Augusteen, you girl without there!" roared Kilbride, running into the kitchen: "Augusteen M^cManus! some water in a

hurry." Then seizing a large can, he returned, followed by the maid, who raised Agnes in her arms, and began to sprinkle the water gently on her face.

"You see what you have done," said Bartley, turning to the Priest.

"We've gone too far to draw back now," rejoined the Priest, hastily taking a book from his pocket, and throwing a broad-coloured ribbon over his shoulders: "I'll marry you at once, while she can make no resistance. If it don't satisfy her to-morrow, you can get it done over again."

"You have the heart of a flint-stone," cried Bartley, in dismay. "Why the girl may be dying this minute!"

"Tut, man," said Father Redmond, "you're a fool, and something beyant that, if I would say what. It's all a piece of acting. She'll think ten times more of you for showing yourself a boy of spirit. Many a hearty laugh you'll have together for this night's frolic. Twelve hundred pounds now, and

more after, will make all right in the end, even supposing there is a little wrangling in the beginning."

The love of money was rapidly closing all the avenues to Kilbride's better feelings. He stuttered and drew back, looked at Agnes and then at the priest, advanced again, and again retreated.

"Oh, if I an't ashamed of you!" cried Mrs. Foy, with a look of scorn. "You well deserve the treatment you'll get when all the girls in the country will teach the dogs to bark at you for a dunce, as you walk along the road."

"I've too great a wish for him to let that be the case," said Father Redmond. "Stand there man, and take some money in your hand: the mistress will lend you the ring, and answer for her. Why it's as good a marriage as the one I had to do for a dummy last week."

Agnes began to exhibit signs of returning consciousness, but was unable to speak.

Gilbert and his wife stood on one side of her, and Kilbride on the other ; whilst the Priest began to read as fast as he could get the words out.

“Drop that book, Redmond Garraghan !” suddenly cried Augusteen M°Manus, springing from the ground, and giving the book a blow, which sent it whirling to the other side of the room : “if you say another word of your gibberish, you’ll swing as high as your uncle’s son Pat M°Govran did, three weeks ago.”

It would be impossible to describe the consternation and the rage depicted on the countenance of the Priest at this unexpected interruption. Gilbert Foy and his wife looked at one another in amazement ; Kilbride looked half terrified, half amused. In a few minutes Gilbert Foy’s rage obtained the mastery over him, and raising his brawny arm, he was about to fell Augusteen to the ground.

“Don’t lift a hand to me, at your peril,”

said Augusteen, looking at him undauntedly. Slowly he lowered his arm. "If I gave but one screech," she continued, "there's them about the house will be in upon you, in spite of bolt or window-bar, before you can double the blow; and then the county jail will be your lodging, before the clouds grow red in the sky."

The Priest was the first to recover himself, so as to speak with some degree of calmness. "I wonder, Augusteen, how you are not ashamed," said Father Redmond, "to speak in that outrageous manner before your master and mistress, not considering me, your guide and your teacher."

"And where would you guide me to if I was to folly you?" replied Augusteen: "and what would you teach but what it's as well not to larn? It's you who ought to be ashamed to look me in the face,—me who could bring that agin you would make the blood run cold to hear. The story isn't locked up from the ears of the world. It

got wind, and it lies safe in Protestant keeping ; and if any ill chance happens to me for a year and a day after I'm seen in your company, it will all come out. So take the advice of a poor girl, and take care of yourself, Father Redmond."

Mrs. Foy struggled hard between rage and alarm : the latter at last predominated. "Augusteen," she said, "I ever knew you had a bad tongue, but I didn't think your mind was that evil as to cast up murder and crime to them that was only funning a little with a young couple about an innocent joke to pass away the time."

"The sooner you are done with your jokes the better," replied Augusteen ; "or may be I may begin to joke too : and if I once get into the spirit of it, I may go on till I twist hemp enough for all your necks, and that would be a joke worth a hundred of yours put together."

Mrs. Foy's agitation set her tongue running as usual. She rattled on without well

knowing what she said. "Have you no work to do in the kitchen but you must take your seat in the parlour, Augusteen M^cManus? And will you be mistress and maid too, when you won't let me sprinkle a drop of water on my own blood-relation, that fainted when she was tired out laughing at the fun of my man? Gibby, you was always over-boisterous in your play: I often said so. Agnes, dear, come to yourself, like a good girl. Sure you won't think so bad of a little joke as to get into fits and convulsions? Sure you wouldn't think that I, who loved your mother before all, would hurt a hair of your head, dear?"

"You had better never heed her," said Augusteen, "till the place is cleared so that she can draw her breath. Father Redmond, it's best for you not to be too long going: people may be wondering what keeps you; and if they walked into us and catechised us, there's no knowing what I might say in my fright. Go straight down the road:

nobody will molest you if you keep company with Mr. Kilbride; for then they'll give a guess that no harm's done. I took an oath, and I'll keep it; only if there's wickedness going on, I might be tempted to break it."

The priest and the poor craven bridegroom followed her advice.

"That Augusteen M^cManus," said the former, as they walked to the stable, "is little short of a devil incarnate. She had a sister worse nor herself, that died last year; them two would swear away the life of a man as soon as I would throw this saddle over my horse. I didn't judge it proper to say much to her now, but I'll have her in my power yet."

"Now, Miss," said Augusteen to Agnes, "they are gone, and you may get a little heart. I'll carry you into the room, and sit up with you all night; so don't be uneasy."

"I can't believe a word spoken in this house," said Agnes, trying to totter to the


door. "If you mean truth and honesty let me leave it at once."

"The longer you stay in it the more lies you'll hear,—that's certain sure," answered the maid. "But you'll be safe in it for this night, if it was thatched with lies. I'm as good to you as a guard of soldiers. I sent off the priest and the bachelor, and I know what will keep the people of Dunamoyle at a distance too."

"What do you know?" began Mrs. Foy; but restraining herself, she turned to Agnes and said, "I'll never forgive myself, nor Gibby neither, for carrying the joke so far, and your spirits so weak. A little rest will do you good, dear; and I'll make Augusteen sleep in the room with you to take off the nerves."

"Mrs. Foy," said Agnes, looking at her with doubt and dismay, "after what has happened can I believe you?"

Mrs. Foy instantly raised her hands, and eyes, and began a solemn appeal to



heaven concerning the rectitude of her intentions.

“Don’t swear!” shrieked Agnes, relapsing into hysterics. “They all swore, and they all called God to witness, when they were preparing one snare after another for me.”

“Och! och!” cried Augusteen, “and is there none above to take the orphan’s part? Miss, I don’t want you to believe me, only this once, for I can tell lies to serve a turn as well as another; but I’m speaking truth now, from the bottom of my heart; and, trust me, before harm happens to you this night they’ll swim in my blood. Come, Miss, them that follies us will get a welcome they won’t like.”

“May be you’d take a drop of wine, or a glass of punch, or something, dear, after your sickness?” said Mrs. Foy, as Augusteen assisted Agnes to get into the bedroom; but the good-natured offer never reached her ear, being drowned in the noise made

by Augusteen locking the door and pulling a heavy oaken chest against it.

"I only do this to satisfy your mind," said she to Agnes, "for there's not a bit of fear they'll come nigh us: they'll lie down more in dread nor you will, helpless as you are. When there's guilt in the breast, cowardliness won't be kept out a times, though the boldest spirit keeps the door. If it wasn't for that, would they be so ready daunted when I said there was somebody outside on the watch?"

"And was there no one who could hear your cries, as you said?" asked Agnes.

"Not one," said Augusteen: "who could there be that wouldn't be as bad as themselves? And they might have guessed as much, only for the terror that got the better of them. Two polissmen passed the door about two hours before, and they stopped to ask about a stray sheep. That put it into my head, for the master was unasy to know what they said, and I wouldn't tell

him, just not to satisfy him. Since I was the hoith of my knee, I have lived among them that had no fear of God or man,—them who would as soon do harm as good; and I often remarked that the man who wouldn't wink an eye when he was going to shoot a Christian, would tremble at the sound of a withered leaf fluttering from a tree, if it came on him by surprise, when he had mischief in his mind. Now, try to get a little sleep, Miss Agnes, and don't talk to me; for I'll have to sit thinking what I can do for you to-morrow, to get you out of the grip of the bloodhounds you threw yourself among."



CHAPTER X.

THE RESCUE.

NEXT morning Mr. Goldtrap was at Croom Castle at an early hour, and was closeted with Mr. Eyrebury for a considerable time. Whilst Miss Eyrebury waited for the gentlemen to join her at the breakfast table, she was busy giving directions to her maid; and as the latter was about to leave the room, she added: "I forgot to mention what I am sure you will be glad to hear. My brother intends to take us to England early next month. His stay will be short; but I shall not return, unless I can prevail upon my mother to return with me, which is not likely; so, Winter, you

will have your wish, and will get away from these people whom you dislike so much."

"I'm not afraid to stay here, Ma'am," said Winter, looking rather downcast at the intelligence conveyed to her by her mistress. "It's a pity, after spending the worst part of the year here, Ma'am, to go away when the weather is becoming so delightful. I shall be quite sorry to leave all the beautiful crocuses, and the school, and the young plantation on the hill."

Miss Eyrebury looked surprised. The maid blushed, and added, speaking somewhat confusedly, "One ought to be glad certainly to see one's own country, which is the only country where people know how to live as they ought, and I did not expect to be sorry for leaving Ireland. Besides, Ma'am," stopping a little to find some other reason for wishing to remain in Ireland, "I never saw such a clergyman as Mr. Leighton. I do like his preaching so much, and I'm

sure I can never bear to listen to old Mr. Goodenough again."

"Winter," said Miss Eyrebury, "I hope you are not deceiving me. No one can have a higher opinion of Mr. Leighton than I have; but I cannot help thinking that there's more than your partiality to Mr. Leighton and the crocuses and the weather that makes you wish to remain here."

"As to partiality, Ma'am," said Winter, "I have no partiality,—indeed I should be very sorry to have any partiality, if you did not approve of it. I always said that I would not do anything to disoblige you; and that I would not, for any consideration, leave you unprovided with proper attendance so long as you remained in this country."

"Then you do not mean to return with me to England?" asked Miss Eyrebury, with a surprised look.

"Mrs. Bennet, Ma'am, says that the house, which is very nicely papered, and furnished quite genteel, will be positively

destroyed by those common Irish servants, unless somebody who knows what's right and proper takes care of it. The shop takes up all his time, and he is quite uncomfortable. If it was not for Mrs. Bennet, who continues to manage a little for him, he would be obliged to give up house-keeping, or perhaps marry some person that he didn't care about, which you know, Ma'am, would be unpleasant and disagreeable."

"Who is this person," said Miss Eyrebury, looking still more surprised, "for whose comfort you seem to be so much interested?"

"I assure you, Ma'am," replied the maid, "I'm not at all interested; though a girl who has two hundred pounds saved might be interested. Mrs. Bennet can vouch for me, that I never spoke of my own interest. He was the first to mention anything about it, and offered very fair and very genteel, of his own accord."

"But you haven't told me who this person

is of whom you are speaking?" again inquired Miss Eyrebury.

"You know Mrs. Bennet, Ma'am?" said Winter. "Well, Mr. Price is her nephew. He is a very respectable young man, Ma'am, and an Orangeman. He keeps that handsome new shop in the main street, and has a very profitable farm under Mr. Eyrebury, Ma'am. He is first cousin to Mr. Goldtrap, and has other genteel connections; and he will sell his horse, having but little time for riding, and will buy a steady quiet one for the jaunting-car he bespoke in Dublin last week."

"If you have not finally settled this matter," quietly remarked Miss Eyrebury, "will you allow me to mention it to my brother, that he may make inquiries into the character and circumstances of the young man?"

"There's nothing settled, Ma'am," said Winter: "I positively refused to leave you whilst you remained in Ireland. I said to

Mrs. Bennet,—but, Ma'am, I hear the gentlemen coming. I'm so much obliged to you, Ma'am, and Mr. Eyrebury ; and Mrs. Bennet will be so glad to hear, Ma'am, that I have your approbation."

Winter disappeared just as the gentlemen entered the room. Goldtrap had on a look of great importance, and Mr. Eyrebury seemed very much disconcerted. He made an effort to appear unconcerned ; but as soon as he had commenced his breakfast, he resumed the conversation which he had had with his agent in his study. "Goldtrap," he said, "the more I think of your story, the more improbable it appears. It borders so much on the romantic, that one would suppose you were telling the plot of the last novel you had read, or recounting the circumstances of last night's dream."

"I never read a novel in my life," said Goldtrap, looking somewhat offended : "I leave novel reading to people who have nothing to do. Neither have I any relish

for romancing : I'm a plain matter-of-fact man ; and every word of what I have said is true, as sure as my name is Goldtrap."

"Well," said Mr. Eyrebury, "admitting the fact to be possible or probable, you must nevertheless pardon me if I am a little incredulous, when I consider the source from which you derived your information."

"I am sure of my information," said Goldtrap : "and what's more, I will act upon it. Remember, I'm a magistrate. I came here as a matter of civility, just to let you know what villainy was going on amongst your tenants ; but I intend to do my duty, no matter who likes and who dislikes it."

Miss Eyrebury, who feared from Goldtrap's evident irritability that unpleasant consequences might result from this conversation, tried to keep both gentlemen engaged in discussing other matters of less importance. To some extent she succeeded : yet Goldtrap would, in spite of every manœuvre, return to the subject which was

uppermost in his mind ; and after detailing to Miss Eyrebury what he had already related to her brother, the events of the previous night at Dunamoyle farm, he added that Miss Murphy was to be that very day removed to a nunnery, or to a madhouse, or to some other place where she would be compelled to die a Papist, if she could not be persuaded to live one.

“Kate, you needn’t look so shocked,” said Mr. Eyrebury to his sister: “do you suppose I could be unconcerned if I believed that such atrocities were being committed on my estate? Ask Mr. Goldtrap where he obtained his information, and I think you will agree with me as to the propriety of making some further inquiries before I subject myself to ridicule by interfering in so foolish a business.”

“Miss Eyrebury, it’s as true as that you are sitting there,” said Goldtrap. “The story came from the best place in the country to hear what’s going on,—from

Corny Mahony's forge. Corny is half-brother to Mick Doherty, the fellow that lives with Bishop Mac Royster, and he was at the forge this morning before daylight, crammed with news. It seems that it is his custom to listen at the door when any one is with his master; and so last night he heard Father Redmond Garraghan giving an account to his superior of how their scheme about Miss Murphy had quite failed. He was in such a hurry to tell all he knew, that he never noticed Mr. Leighton's groom, who had brought two horses to be shod. Of course Leighton's man, who is a Protestant, and not over fond of the priests, came and told me, and I arranged my plans in a moment. I perched my son Forester on a big pear-tree in the garden, with a spy-glass in his hands, and with orders to report to me who went in and who came out of Dunamoyle farm. I sent off Tom and Hackleshaw, my other sons, with their guns, into the park, to watch as

if they were lying in wait for rabbits. I set the police to keep a sharp look out towards Ballindona ; and I have a dozen stout Protestant boys, who are all drawing round Dunamoyle without being suspected. The Foy's and their friends must have the devil himself to help them if they can spirit her away after all my precautions."

"In the meantime," inquired Miss Eyrebury, "how do you intend to proceed?"

"I'll tell you," said Goldtrap. "I am on my way to Dunamoyle now. I thought Mr. Eyrebury would like to go too, or I should have been there long ago. I will just civilly order that fellow Foy to let me have an interview with Miss Murphy ; if he refuses, the police will be at my heels to search every hole and corner till I find her : if she is not forthcoming, every one of them, Mrs. Foy and all, shall be sent to gaol ; and let me see the magistrate will dare to take bail when murder is sworn against them."

This was said with a certain air of de-

fiance, which caused the colour to mount high in Mr. Eyrebury's cheeks. He was about to make some remark, when in rushed Winter, in one of her violent fits of alarm. "Oh, Sir!" she exclaimed, evidently in great terror, "the rebellion is begun." Mr. Eyrebury rose from his seat, and went to the window. "Look, Sir, there are thousands coming, with drums beating and trumpets sounding; and we shall all be murdered in a moment, unless you send to Lisahuddart for the Orangemen to protect us."

"Don't be silly, Winter," said Goldtrap, hurrying to the window. "Who ever heard of a rebellion beginning in broad daylight? Don't be alarmed, Miss Eyrebury. It must be a fox that has got into the demesne, and Lewis has raised the country to shoot him."

Miss Eyrebury, not without some alarm, drew towards the window, and perceived a large body of labourers running from the field in which they had been working, towards a sunk fence separating the lawn from

the deer-park ; and far off in the opposite direction came another party, shouting and making all kinds of signals. In a few seconds, Hackleshaw and Tom Goldtrap were seen descending a hill with the speed of greyhounds, evidently with a view to hinder the junction of the two parties ; whilst Forester Goldtrap spurring his horse till he got him into full speed, and now and then sounding a blast on his bugle, cleared hedge and ditch as he rapidly advanced to support his brothers.

“ There are my boys doing their duty,” cried the delighted father : “ I wouldn’t exchange them for as many king’s sons with crowns on their heads. But they’ll never be able to hold their ground against such odds.” Just as he spoke these words, he rushed out of the room shouting at the servants, “ John, Philip, Edward, arm yourselves, boys, with whatever you can lay your hands on, and be after me in less than no time.”

Mr. Eyrebury followed as quickly as he could, attended by Philip, the Irish footman, who seized one of the hall chairs as the object nearest to him ; whilst the English servants ran up and down calling for guns, pistols, and swords ; wasting their time, as Mr. Goldtrap afterwards complained, when the poker or the gridiron would have answered their purpose as well if not better.

Miss Eyrebury still remained at the window, watching with a good deal of anxiety the motions of the various groups of persons assembled in the field. Whether they were friends or foes, or what object they had in view it was impossible to guess. The party moving in the direction of the sunk fence had nearly reached the fence, when a man who was a little in advance of his companions, in trying to make a spring in order to clear the fence, was tripped up by a young girl who lay in concealment. The girl did not stop to speak to any of the party, but attacked them with stones, of which she

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had a liberal supply. The two young Gold-traps saw what was going on, cheered the girl and came up at once to her assistance. Then pointing their guns, one towards the assailants from the field, the other in the direction of those who were hurrying through the deer-park, they threatened to fire. This manœuvre had the desired effect: many of the most advanced on both sides took to their heels. The others ducked their heads and retreated a few steps, apparently to consider whether they should run away or manfully face the danger. The girl took advantage of this pause to adjust her hair which had fallen about her shoulders, and then disappeared behind the sunk fence, having first filled her apron with stones to be prepared for another encounter.

In the meantime, the party from the Castle had arrived at the scene of action, and were joined by Forester Goldtrap and three armed policemen. Winter had taken up her position at one of the windows which

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commanded a view of what was going on, and immediately above her at another window was Olivia the kitchen-maid. Winter's tongue rattled on at a great rate: "Whatever it is Ma'am," she said to her mistress, "I think it's not a rebellion; for you see they are all civil to Mr. Eyrebury, and I believe nobody is civil in a rebellion. Olivia, can you hear what Mr. Forester Goldtrap is saying to his father? Don't you wonder, Ma'am, why Mr. Hackleshaw Goldtrap still keeps his gun presented at the people in the deer-park; and why he will not let that tall young man come near him? Olivia, who is that young man talking over the fence to Mr. Tom Goldtrap, and what can they be all pointing at? Dear me! look at Mr. Eyrebury, Ma'am, he has leaped down; I wonder why he would not stay at this side where the people are quiet. Why are they all crowding about Mr. Goldtrap, Olivia? I know Ma'am he's scolding by the way he turns round so quickly. They

are running again ; they are all jumping over ; there go the police. What are the police doing now, Olivia ? If they fire I shall drop down dead. Is it a rebellion do you think, Olivia ? Oh, Olivia, Olivia, why can't you tell me what they are about ? That great tree hides them from my view, and if I do not see or hear I shall faint. Ma'am, I'm sure it's a rebellion. Olivia, I wish you would say so at once ; if it's a rebellion I know what I shall do."

"It's nothing of the kind," screamed Olivia ; "it's only a thrifle, as well as I see. The neighbours is just murdering each other about something, and the gentlemen will settle them in a hurry. What can they be at, at all, at all ? I never seen anything I couldn't give a guess to afore. Anyhow, since big Gilbert, from Dunamoyle, is foremost, it's asy to know there's mischief brewing. Oh, the villain ! if he hasn't jumped upon Master Hackleshaw, and is twisting the gun out of his hand. Shoot him, shoot

him, Master Hackleshaw! Well, only see that: if the master hasn't pulled down Master Tom's arm. And look at them poliss there taking the gun from the gentleman, instead of helping him. A purty set you are, with your caps and green jackets. What business has the likes o' you making pace, when you're paid well for fighting? More power to you, Master Forester! Two of the Moyallart boys is down with one swing of his blowing-horn. Oh, of all the people in the world, who is there but Nelly Grimes in the very thick of them, and Andy Britton shoving her back from the ditch! What are you about, Andy? May be the woman wants to get out of the fray, and what are you pushing her back into it for? Deaf Paddy Burn is down on his two knees to Master Tom. Ah, he'll make ye hear, I'll warrant ye! Oh, murther, murther! Mr. Goldtrap is tumbled into the gripe, and he's killed and destroyed. He'll never eat bit, or drink sup again, poor gentleman, and

he with a long family, too. No : there he is on his feet again, well and hearty, driving all before him with his whip. Ah, there's that cracked-looking girl again, with her hair roving about her shoulders! who is she, at all, at all? and what is she saying to the master?"

Olivia paused awhile to take breath. Winter, who had listened to her hitherto in silence, was about to make some remark, when Olivia's tongue started on a fresh ramble.

"Oh, what will I do?" she shouted; "Gilbert Foy has got the gun, and he'll be the death of that girl. Run, run for your life! Stand behind the master, and he can't shoot you. Oh, Philip Ray, Philip Ray! There, he has smashed the beautiful new hall chair on big Gilbert's head. You'll lose your place, Philip, for that blow; but how could the boy help it? Well done, Sergeant Lennon! He has Gilbert under him. Kick away, Gilbert, you have met

your match at last. It's only now the sport is beginning. Miss Winter, it's worth your while to be up here. You never seen such fun. The master is doing his best to stop them, and so is Mr. Goldtrap, but sorra a mind they mind them. Fight away, boys! It's worth walking twenty miles to see the likes of this. Oh, if my Aunt Molly was here, it's she'd be glad to see this sight! The Kelly's is keeping up the fight now. They're mad at the usage big Gilbert is getting, he being one of them by the mother's side. If they could master Larry Kelly, the day would be their own. They're at him now. Down with him, Andy! Oh, Andy, have you nothing to fight with but the leg of the new hall chair? It never can be mended if you lose that leg. The Kelly's is flagging. Larry is quiet enough at last. Master Tom has him by one arm, and Andy has a fast grip of the other. Well, to be sure, I never seen such a set: the half of them is sneaking away. All

are stretching over the top, and Master Tom has taken the black silk handkercher from round his neck and gave it to some one below. I hear every word they say plain, but I can't hear what they're talking about. Oh, Miss Winter, Miss Winter! do you see the top of the chair coming up, up, up, and them stretching to catch it? Oh, Miss Winter, if there isn't a corpse on it—a dead corpse all in white with a red cloak! It's the girl that made all the uproar. No, it isn't: it's another girl! There she is pulled up by Mr. Price, who keeps the new shop at Lisahuddart."

"What did you say about Mr. Price, Olivia?" cried Winter.—"Who's pulling Mr. Price about?—Why don't you answer, girl?"

Winter might have waited long for an answer to her question; for Olivia had left the window, and was rushing down stairs at full speed, to meet the procession which was moving up the avenue towards the Castle.



"Mr. Goldtrap led the way up the high steps of the hall-door, followed by two of his sons, carrying Agnes Murphy on the unfortunate hall-chair." PAGE 257.

CHAPTER XI.

A MAGISTERIAL INVESTIGATION.

MR. Goldtrap, talking in a very loud tone of voice and flourishing his whip, led the way up the high steps leading to the hall-door of Croom Castle. He was followed by his two sons, who carried Agnes Murphy on the unfortunate hall-chair, supported on either side by Mr. Price and Augusteen M^cManus. Then came Mr. Eyrebury, surrounded by a number of men, who all talked at once ; next followed a police constable, who alternately comforted and scolded Nelly Grimes, whilst Nelly grumbled and threatened by turns ; after these came the other prisoners, Gilbert Foy looking grim and

sulky, and Larry Kelly very voluble and good-humoured. The procession was brought up by a mob of men and women, who would force their way into the Castle, in spite of the expostulations of the butler and the steward. One must go in, as he would be wanted to explain all to the gentlemen; another had poor Mr. Foy's stick, and wanted to give it up to him; a third was first cousin to Sergeant Lennon, and sure hadn't he good right to get in and see how the case was settled. In the end, as each one gave some reason for wishing to get in, all were admitted.

"I am almost as ignorant of the cause of all this commotion as you are, Kate," said Mr. Eyrebury, in reply to his sister's inquiries; "for all are so eager to speak, that it is quite impossible to hear three consecutive words. All that I can tell you is, that I found this young woman, who I find is the heroine of Goldtrap's romance,—a true one, I fear,—fainting in the sunk fence, and

that, I suppose, she is the cause of all the disturbance."

"Wasn't I right to be on my sharps, Miss Eyrebury?" said Goldtrap. "If I had been shilly shally and delicate about giving offence to ruffians and Jesuits, Mr. Foy might have been laughing at us in his sleeve, instead of getting his due; and he shall get it, or my name is not Goldtrap."

"Mr. Eyrebury," said Gilbert Foy, "I don't know where to look for justice and redress if you don't give it to me, which is what I expect from a gentleman like you. Is a man of my substance to be treated like a common felon, when I was only looking after my property that was robbed from me by them two vagrants of women there?"

"If you lost nothing only by us, you're safe enough, Mr. Foy," remarked Augusteen, quietly, as she arranged Agnes' dress. Agnes, meanwhile, in a half-fainting state, gazed vacantly at the people collected around her.

"They robbed me, Sir," repeated Gilbert ; "they are notorious robbers, one and the other. Why did they lock up my wife ? Why did they climb the haggard gate, and skulk under walls and ditches, with cloaks about their heads ? And am I to be killed and murdered and dragged about by poliss-men only for looking after my own ?"

"Plase your honour," said Augusteen, "you wouldn't hear a word of truth out of that man's mouth if you listened to him for a quarter ; but I'll tell you all about it, without fear or favour. It was necessary for Miss Murphy to quit big Gilbert's place as soon and as private as she could ; for what reason, he may give a guess at hisself. So I watched my time, when he went to the field, and Mrs. Foy was in the dairy, spilling up the milk ; and my name isn't Augusteen M^cManus, if I didn't turn the key upon her and left her there. I knowed that she might screech her life out before any one could hear her, if it wasn't old Rose

Reilly, who was sitting in the kitchen, and wouldn't know if you fired a gun over her shoulder. It was Rose's cloak I flung over Miss Murphy, and we stole behind the hedge till we crossed the Banshee's hollow."

"You robbers, you," interrupted Gilbert Foy, with a look of intense rage.

"Silence, Foy," said Mr. Eyrebury. "Let us hear her story; we will hear what you have to say presently. Go on,—" nodding to Augusteen.

"Well, Sir, as I was saying," continued Augusteen, "we were making the best of our way under the shelter of the hill, on towards Parson Leighton's, where she had a fancy to go, when that woman there, that they call Nelly, got a sight of her white dress, and set up the shout after us. 'It's to Croom we must go now,' says I. So I dragged her over the park wall, and we scrambled through the whins and briars, till we come close to the ditch; and then it was she fell into the fit, seeing Gilbert and his

pack running and hallooing us. I couldn't carry her up the ungainly face of it : it was so high and steep, that I had nothing to do but pelt them with stones to keep them off as well as I could. Your honour knows all the rest. It's truth I tell, your honour, and if you take his word after, why, what can I do ? She's desolate and persecuted, and has no man to make her moan to ; but there's justice beyant in the sky, and it will fall on the hard-hearted sooner or later."

"I'll take nobody's word," said Goldtrap. "I'll have you all on your oath. Push over that table, Edward ; now run for a Bible. Where's that Tim Graydon ? Tim, have you a bit of chalk about you ? Och, man ! you ought to have : down with you to the workshop and bring me a piece in a minute. I want to make a cross on the Prayer-book, Miss Eyrebury ; they'd all swear false without it : there's no coming up to their tricks. Forester, push over that chair for Mr. Eyrebury. Miss Winter, you needn't be at all

afraid : I'll not damage the book at all ; the chalk will rub off without leaving a mark. Now clear the way there. Miss Murphy, take the book in your hand.—You shall true answer make Why, child, you are to hold the book, and kiss it when I bid you, and then you are to give your evidence ; and then I will commit Gilbert Foy to gaol, and have a warrant after his wife, and others whom it's as good not to name, for fear they'd say I was prompting you. So now, —you shall true answer make”

“Sir,” said Agnes, pushing away the book, “I wouldn't swear away the life of my worst enemy. As it is, I have more put on me than I am well able to bear, and what would become of me if I had blood on my head besides ?”

“There's no fear of hanging them, Miss Murphy,” said Goldtrap. “I know well what you have to say : I know all about last night, and the worst that can come of it is transportation ; may be not even that.

They may get off with a little confinement, and if the judge does his duty, a turn at the treadmill into the bargain."

"I do not wish to harm them at all, Sir. I forgive them from my heart. I have seen so much trouble myself that I don't like to be putting it on others. If Mr. Foy is a prisoner here on my account, you may let him go free, for I wish no ill to him, and I will do him none."

"What's come over you girl?" said Gold-trap, somewhat pettishly. Don't you know they want to put you into a madhouse, or send you to Spain to a foreign nunnery?"

Agnes looked alarmed, and turned very pale for a moment, but soon recovered her composure.

"They may have bad thoughts in their mind towards me," said she, "and God forgive them if they have; but that's no reason why I should follow their example. It don't belong to one poor sinner to do evil to another. The word of the wise and just

One says, 'Avenge not yourselves, neither give place unto wrath.' Then, Sir, I could not speak of their doings without exposing others who for many a long year acted a parent's part by me when I was poor and fatherless; and though they have changed to me, and though—no matter—I will never turn on them and bring the scorn of the world to their door. Sir, my mind is weak, and I'm ashamed to be made a gaze and a show of in this manner; and if you please, Sir, I would rather have no more said about me. If you can protect me for a few days till I am free from them all, I will thank you, Sir, from my heart, and I hope there may be no more trouble to any person on my account."

"Now, Miss Murphy, only consider"—

"Goldtrap," interrupted Mr. Eyrebury, "I cannot allow you to press this subject any further. Miss Murphy, I respect your motives, and you may rest assured of protection whilst you remain in the country."

"Did the world ever see such folly?" exclaimed Mr. Goltrap. "But, Foy, I haven't done with you yet, my man. Stand out here, girl," beckoning to Augusteen. "We shan't have such qualms of conscience from you, judging by the way you carried yourself this morning. What have you to say about this fellow?"

"There isn't a bigger villain in the world nor big Gilbert himself," answered Augusteen, with the greatest composure; "but I've nothing to say agin him. If Miss Murphy calls on me to spake, why I'll do so; but if she holds her tongue I'll hold mine, seeing it's nobody else's business but her own. They well deserve to be gibbeted for the treatment they gave her, but they never hurt me, because they daren't."

"Well, that bangs all," said Goldtrap, losing his temper. "Hackleshaw! Where are you, Hackleshaw? I'll take your deposition against this man for an assault, if nobody else will swear against him. There

are plenty of witnesses to prove the fact. Such a fellow mustn't be let loose on the country, and no notice taken of his tricks. Take the book, Hackleshaw?"

"It was no assault, father," said Hackleshaw; "it was rather a wrestling match. At all events he's punished enough as far as I am concerned. I fancy he'll have a swimming in his head for some time from the touch I gave him with the butt end of my gun."

"Mr. Eyrebury," said Gilbert, "I take you to witness what that young sprig says. He assaulted and battered me by his own confession. Now, Sir, I insist on my deposition being taken agin him, and moreover agin my servant girl for robbery."

"I tell you what, Mr. Foy," said the Squire; "if you take my advice, you will say nothing about that. If you insist on giving your evidence, I shall feel it my duty to insist on this young lady deposing to the occurrences of last night, which you are

aware will not bear the light. If you consult your own interest, you will let the matter rest here, go your way, and be a wiser man for the future."

Goldtrap looked at Gilbert Foy, who took Mr. Eyrebury's advice, and slunk out of the room; and as he saw his intended victim disappear, he muttered to himself that he would see the fellow safe under lock and key in the county gaol yet.

"And what will you do with me, plase your honour?" asked Larry Kelly, as Foy left the room: "what had I to do in it more nor Gilbert, who is got off scot free?"

"Ho! ho!" Mr. Larry," said Goldtrap; "always the first in a row. I'll make an example of you, Larry, if it was only for your own good. Andy Britton, come out here. I saw this fellow mauling you at a fine rate, and now is your time to have justice."

"Ah, let me go, girl! let me go, I tell you," cried Andy, who was in the middle of

the crowd at the end of the hall. "Don't you hear the gentleman calling me? What do I know of anybody's leg or foot? It was well for me I had a leg of my own to stand on with the randling I got."

"Mr. Goldtrap," vociferated the kitchen-maid, bursting through the crowd, and running up to the table: "I'll take twenty book oaths that I seen that leg in his hand as good as ever it was, barring just where it was cracked across at first."

"Whose leg? what leg?" asked Goldtrap, in amazement.

"The beautiful new hall-chair," replied Olivia, amidst roars of laughter from those in the hall; "the chair that big Gilbert from Dunamoyle broke with his head. Andy Britton there is at the bottom of the leg, if he would but confess it; and Tim says he'll glue it on, so that you wouldn't know there was a haporth the matter with it."

"Stand by, Olivia Bochagan," said Goldtrap. "I can't hear that complaint now."

Andy, don't be keeping me here all day, but out with your complaint against Larry Kelly at once."

"What complaint have I agin you, Larry?" asked Andy. "You have a right to know better nor me, being taller, and able to see what was doing, when I wasn't: was it you gave me the bang on the left shoulder when I had my knee upon your breast?"

"Well, now, if you was to pison me, Andy," replied Larry, "I couldn't be sure of anything. All I know is, that everybody bet me and I bet everybody. I can tell you I'd have made a good fight of it yet, only Master Tom pinned me behind, and let you murder me as well as you could."

"And didn't I often warn you," said Andy, "that you'll ever have the worst in a fight; you are so headstrong and heedless. If you had only"

"Stop your prate between you both," cried Goldtrap. "You are enough to make a man lose his temper. You have escaped

for this time, Larry ; but I hope you'll soon give me a chance of sending you to gaol, where you ought to have been long ago, only I'm too mild with you. Set off with yourself, and thank your stars you're a free man yet.

"Sergeant Lennon, walk over Mrs. Grimes, if you please. Mrs. Grimes, I can manage your business myself, without asking any one to assist me. I heard you with my own ears encouraging Gilbert Foy to shoot that harum-scarum looking girl, which any jury would find manslaughter against you. It will go hard with you, let me tell you ; but to show that I will do nothing hand over head, I am willing to hear what you have to say before I commit you."

"As I'm a living woman, Master Goldtrap dear," said Nelly Grimes, "I don't know what I said nor what I done ; and you won't punish me for being out of my senses, and breaking my heart about my beautiful boy that's dead and murdered, and stiff and cold by this time, for anything I know."

"Oh, you unnatural woman," said Gold-trap: "do you mean to say that you brought your child into such bad work at his age? Where's the boy? Was he hurt? Why don't some of you run to fetch Dr. Beggs? May be the boy is dying."

"If your honour and worship would only hear me out! My mother—heavens be her bed—is, you know, dead these nine years last harvest. She left it on me in her dying hour to do a station for her at the seven churches below Corrigbrannagan wanst in every year. Och! the neighbours can tell how I kep my promise, doing more for her nor anybody would do for twenty mothers. Well, I was preparing for my duty last week; and Jemmy, seeing that I was wake, and how I got a plurisy the last time, would go in my place, whether I would or no. His father and myself was proud, I won't deny it, to see him so given to his religion; and we let him go, with our blessing and seventeen pence in his pocket, besides a little lock of

male to bear his charges. He's away now going on eight days, and the eyes is dropping out of my head with crying, afraid some of the pilgrims would put him out of the way, for the sake of the little penny he had about him. I was only watching the daylight to be up and after him, when a message came from Mrs. Foy, ordering me up to Dunamoyle to stay all the day, because she wanted me to—— she wanted me—— what did she want me for? Oh, it was about flax, I think they said, only I disremember what it was, and"

"What, in the name of all that's good, has all this to do with your wanting Gilbert to shoot the girl?" asked Goldtrap, impatiently. "I may as well commit you at once, for you're only wasting my time, like the rest of them."

"Master Goldtrap, Sir, just hear me out, and you'll see I'm innocent. Where was I? It was about Mrs. Foy. Well, she being a good warrant to be friendly to me, I wouldn't

refuse her. My man went after Jemmy, and I only waited to give the childer their breakfast, when I goes for Dunamoyle, without saying a word to man or beast; and I was jist turning by the park wall, when who should I see but her. I never seen the girl afore; but I knew it was she by what Mrs. Foy sent in her message. No, it wasn't Mrs. Foy tould me at all; it was my own mind. So hearing from the neighbours how she was follying fashions of her own, I thought it wasn't lucky to meet her, and I thought it looked bad for Jemmy; and I shouted and shouted, without knowing what it was I was shouting; and Mrs. Foy and the boys come running, and then I run with them, and I said what they said, and I don't know what I said at all at all, and"—

"You need say no more," said Goldtrap, quietly dipping his pen in the ink. "You will know what you are saying on your trial, I hope."

"What would I be tried for, Mr. Goldtrap?" said Nelly. "Is it for being foolish about my child, that's lost and starved and perished? What malice had I to Miss Murphy, if she turned Protestant a hundred times? Isn't it by Protestants we get our living? And wouldn't I as soon do a good turn for one of them as I would for a Roman? Och! dear Mr. Goldtrap, don't send me to gaol, where one belonging to me never was. I never coveted grandeur nor goodness,—all I want is to live, and die in pace and dacency, if they'll let me."

"Why don't you beg her off, you block-head?" whispered Goldtrap to his son, who was leaning over the back of his chair.

Hackleshaw took the hint. "I hope, Sir," said he, "that you will forgive her for this time. I am sure she's heartily sorry for what has happened, and she wouldn't have taken any part in the disturbance if she had known how it would end."

"Ah, you're a kind soul, Master Hackle-

shaw," said Nelly : "I always knew you were."

"I'll go bail for her," said Sergeant Lennon, seeing that Mr. Goldtrap was disposed to relent. "I'll see that she is not before your honour in a hurry again, if you let her off this time."

"That's the way you all play upon me," remarked Goldtrap : "I'm too easy altogether. However, since you say, Hackleshaw, that she's sorry, and you, Sergeant, that you go bail for her, I'll be persuaded. Get you gone, you terrible woman, and dream of the gallows till you're frightened into good behaviour."

In a few minutes the hall was cleared : the investigation had come to an end.

"What terrified me most of all, Olivia dear," said Nelly to the kitchen-maid, who accompanied her to the hall-door, "was having Agnes Murphy before my eyes. I looked that the roof would fall a-top of us, when the likes of her got liberty to throw

venom off her tongue agin good Christians that was doing all for the honour and glory of our religion. If we had but two hours to ourselves after I got to Dunamoyle, they might have looked for her, and been never the wiser for the search. As for that vagabone Augusteen, may the grass never grow green under her feet : she'll not always have a castle over her head. Remember, I tell you that, Olivia."

But to return to Goldtrap. "They haven't it in them," growled he, in an under-tone, to his son Forester, who had been whispering to him for some time. "I tell you their hearts an't as big as a child's fist. No, I tell you, I won't demean myself, nor her neither, by asking a favour : I'll get it better done without them."

Then rising and approaching Agnes, he said, "I'm glad to be of service to you, Miss Murphy ; and while I have this arm on my body, no one shall look crooked at you. I am only sorry that I can't take you home

at once to my own house, as Mrs. Goldtrap and my daughters are away in Dublin ; and I know well what your smooth uncle Bishop Mac Royster would say if you were to go to a house full of men, and no woman to keep you company and take care of you. But there's a better house than mine that you'll be welcome to ; Mrs. Ireton will be glad to see you. She has a real Irish heart, and a spirit that makes her always do what is generous, though she is a little over-religious."

"If the young lady would like it," said Andy Britton, "she can go to the Glebe. The master will be proud, I know, to give her shelter. I'll be bound, before you think I'm there, Miss Louisa or the mistress will be here in the carriage to bring her home."

"Or, if that's too far," added Mr. Price, "my aunt will send her car for her in a minute. You may stay with us, Miss Murphy, all your life if you please, and no one will dare to say a word to you when

you are in the midst of staunch Protestants like us."

Whilst these invitations were pouring in upon Miss Murphy, who could hardly find words in which to thank her kind friends, Winter had drawn her mistress aside to tell her of a communication just made to her by Mr. Price.

"He says, Ma'am, that the whole country will be scandalized, if Mr. Eyrebury does not ask her to remain here for a week or two, since she threw herself upon him for protection. He says that Lady Eversham, and Lady Catherine, and my Lord himself will wonder; and Mrs Ireton will never stop wondering and talking, and everybody will talk. You know, Ma'am, they have odd customs in this country; and one of them is to take anybody into one's house if they have no house of their own to go to. So Mr. Price says, Ma'am, and he knows. In England its different, he says Ma'am, where there are workhouses, and parishes, and

overseers, and all kinds of civilization, so that nobody is a trouble to anybody."

Miss Eyrebury promptly communicated the substance of this harangue to her brother, who was vexed that he had not thought of it before. He immediately went over to Agnes, and in the kindest manner entreated her to make Croom Castle her home so long as it suited her convenience ; and Miss Eyrebury joined so cordially in the invitation, that when Mr. Goldtrap heard what was going on, he at once recovered his good-humour, and began to think much more favourably of the Eyreburys than he had done before.

"It's too good an offer to be refused, Miss Murphy," said he, "particularly as you do not seem able to go through more fatigue this morning."

"As seemingly you are with friends now, Miss," said Augusteen to Agnes, "I may as well leave you, being no use that I can see ; and if any of the gentlemen would only

send one or two with me to put me a piece of the road, I'd be for ever obliged to them. The country isn't safe for me now, so I'll quit it at once. Some of the men about the place can take Rose her cloak, and tell her she may keep the little things I left behind me, which isn't worth looking after."

Agnes took her hand: "It goes to my heart," she said, "to leave you without being able to show you, except by words, how grateful I am to you for all you have done for me. But if I live, and the world goes better with me than I expect, and if ever I have anything that I can call my own, I'll not forget you, Augusteen."

"Oh, Miss!" replied Augusteen, trying to speak cheerfully, "never heed me. I'll get on well enough. Since I was ten years old I had to look out for myself; and though I was often cast among worse people nor them at Dunamoyle—if there's worse in the world—yet I kep myself to myself, earning my bread, and never knowing much

hardship in the way of want. Keep up a good heart, Miss, for yourself. What's to fear but you'll see better days, and be happy, like the rest of the world?"

Agnes still held her hand, and they stood opposite to each other, weeping with that unrestrained yet quiet sorrow which causes even the most hard-hearted to feel and to express sympathy. Goldtrap was not hard-hearted, although his manner was often harsh; and as he looked on at this affecting scene the tears began to rush into his eyes, when in order to conceal his emotion he rushed across the room and shut one of the windows.

"I shouldn't wonder," he remarked, "if I caught a severe cold in my head sitting so long in this draught without my hat on." Then turning to Miss Eyrebury: "Ah, now!" said he, in the most coaxing of tones, "Couldn't you toss up a bed for this poor creature in the same room with Miss Murphy? She'll save the servants trouble.

Besides, if she's not in the house she'll be sitting the live-long day at the gate, waiting to hear news of her, and very likely frightening the horses with those wild eyes of her's."

"We shall be glad to have her assistance in taking care of Miss Murphy," said Miss Eyrebury, who saw her brother at the moment give a nod of approval; "and I hope she will have no objection to remain with her."

"She will be very useful, Ma'am," said Winter, in a confidential whisper to her mistress. "Mr. Price says so, and he knows. She will be quite a different person when she wears a cap which I will give her to make her look a little genteel."

Goldtrap overheard the last remark, and said in his abrupt way, "Hair was made before caps, I fancy, Miss Winter, and she has better in her heart than you can put on her head. But dress her up as you like, no matter about that. It's all beautifully set-

tled, and I'm very glad it is. Boys, you'll have to dine without me; I'm off to Eversham Hall to have the first story, and a fine story it is. Andy, hurry round my horse. Keep up your spirits, Miss Murphy; good morning to you, Miss Eyrebury. If you were not bred and born in Ireland, you deserve to have been. Take care of that poor girl, and excuse me for saying it, a glass of wine would be greatly in her way just now, poor thing, after the terrible fright she got."


Goldtrap hurried out of the room. Mr. Eyrebury accompanied him to the hall-door, and saw him ride off at a quick trot to Eversham Hall to tell his story. In a few minutes, all who had been spectators of this extraordinary magisterial investigation, separated and went off to their usual occupations; but for many days, Miss Murphy's attempted flight and gallant rescue formed the topic of conversation amongst the villagers of Lisahuddart, as they sat round their bright turf

fires. Bishop Mac Royster and the two priests were sadly disappointed, and not a little irritated at the complete failure of their plans, but they thought it prudent to say as little about the matter as possible.



CHAPTER XII.

AN UNEXPECTED CONCLUSION.

HORTLY after the incidents related in the last chapter, Mr. Eyrebury proposed to carry out his plan of returning for a time to England, and to take his sister with him. It was, of course, considered advisable that Miss Murphy should not remain at Croom Castle when the protection afforded by the presence of the squire was removed ; and it was impossible that she should be permitted to return to her incensed relatives. She was, therefore, asked to accompany Miss Eyrebury to England ; and with a thankful heart she accepted the invitation, in the hope that when her health had been some-

what restored, she would be able to obtain a situation, and to support herself by her own industry.

But Agnes Murphy's days were numbered. Before the day fixed for departure had arrived, she was taken seriously ill. Under the severe discipline of her relations, in Tipperary, she had broken a blood-vessel: this had laid the foundation of pulmonary disease. The excitement through which she had passed during her stay at Dunamoyle farm, the sad thought that her religious convictions had completely alienated from her all her dearest friends and relations, and the prospect of settling in England, amongst perfect strangers, acted on her nervous system, weakened to the last degree; and a cold which she caught brought on rapid inflammation of the lungs. Miss Eyrebury became very much alarmed for her, and begged of her brother to proceed to England without her, as she felt it her duty to remain and watch the patient of whom she

had taken charge. The plans of the whole household were all changed ; and Mr. Eyrebury proceeded to England alone, after giving Goldtrap minute directions about the management of his estate during his absence.

Agnes Murphy's illness increased at an alarming rate, and Dr. Beggs, who was called in to attend her, declared her recovery almost, if not quite, hopeless. He recommended that she should be kept very quiet ; and, above all things, that not one word should be said to her, or in her presence, on the subject of religion. He added, confidentially, that he had known religious zeal to prove more fatal to his patients than the worst epidemic that ever raged ; and instanced Mrs. Ireton's well-intentioned, but injudicious interference with the religious convictions of several of her poor tenants when they were suffering from fever.

Miss Eyrebury, however, soon found that however it might be advisable, as a general rule, to follow Dr. Beggs' advice in this

respect, it was necessary in Miss Murphy's case to follow quite a different system. The constant nervous excitement under which she laboured could only be appeased by directing her attention to some comforting text of Scripture.

Augusteen, with the quick perception so often found amongst persons of her rank in Ireland, was the first to discover this method of calming her fears ; and when poor Agnes, often starting from her uneasy sleep, wildly cried for help, or begged for mercy and deliverance from some imaginary evil, she was in an instant at her side, and in the gentlest tone she would say, " What troubles you, Miss Agnes ? Don't you remember what the gentleman reads, how that you need not be afraid for all the terrors in the darkness of the night, nor for any destruction if it was to walk abroad in the noon-day ? Don't he say, too, that no evil shall light upon you, nor any badness come under the roof where you are ? So think of yourself,

Miss Agnes ; and think of Him who is above all, and who won't let a hair of your head be touched since He knows the count of them."

Miss Eyrebury told Dr. Beggs all this, but still he was incredulous ; and after every visit he renewed his protest against the long reading, and talking, and praying of Mr. Leighton, together with the additional reading and talking of Miss Eyrebury and Augusteen. When, however, he learned that Mrs. Ireton sometimes came to pay Agnes a visit, his indignation was very great indeed.

"That woman will be the death of her," said he, one day, to the kitchen-maid, whom he met in the hall, and who made anxious inquiries after Agnes. "She will tell her at once that she is dying, as she always does. There was no necessity to make such a rout in rescuing her from her relations, who could not take more certain measures to kill her than those which these good people are

resorting to. Tell me, my good girl, is this work going on every hour of the day; for I never come here that there is not somebody preaching at her, and sending her into a high fever."

"They have quare work with them, Sir," said the girl, in a confidential tone. "It's asy to see they think her in a bad way, with all they put on themselves to do for her. She finds the differ now, I believe, from the religion she picked up to the one she left, where she might have got rale comfort."

"Has she expressed any concern about her change of religion?" asked the Doctor; "or did she ever ask to see a Catholic clergyman? because, if she did, I'm sure Miss Eyrebury would let her have her wish."

"The never a know I know what she wishes," answered Olivia. "My business never takes me up stairs only at odd times, to help the turf-basket when the boy is

out ; nor would I covet to be about her, nor any of the servants neither, only Miss Winter, who has her own rasons for being partial to her. But sure, Sir, anybody in his sinses may see the differ of the two religions. Sure, Sir, if one of us is dying, what have we to do, but jist send for the priest, and he comes and jist stays two or three minutes, and does all and no more about it ? He never puts the trouble of praying upon us at that time, nor any other time if it isn't to punish us, which is only proper when we deserve it ; but here, there's such a driving back and forad of Parson Leighton and Parson Rainsworth, and praying going on to no end. And then, Sir, the clargy won't satisfy her, but the mistress herself must be at it ; and even that girl Augusteen must be spelling over the Testament for her, and saying words as it's a shame for a Christian to listen to."

Olivia paused to take breath ; but as she

saw that the Doctor was interested in what she was saying, she proceeded : "It's this, Sir, makes me think that her new religion is but a poor thing compared with ours, that gives little trouble to anyone but priests and Carmelites, and them holy men. I ought to beg pardon, Sir, for speaking so bold to you that has the name of a Protestant ; but I could hear how it was said in yon parlour one day when there was a grand company to dinner, that you had no religion ; so I thought may be you had a laning to our way, and that hindered me from being timorous."

"No matter about that, my good girl," said the Doctor, turning to go : but Olivia was not easily silenced when she could manage to gain the ear of a listener of such importance, so she continued her oration.

"There never was so altered a house," said she, "since her unlucky foot crossed the thrashel of it. Would you believe it, Sir, but the Bishop never heeded the Master

when he saluted him the other day,—he that was always coming and going and doing what he pleased in the house and out of the house, and a blessing was over it then. And poor Father Dennis, that dined here every Sunday, was never axed inside the door from the day Miss Murphy came here ; though I hear he has trouble enough to get his baste to pass the gate, coming from the chapel, the poor dumb brute not knowing why he shouldn't do what he always done before. The Master himself is changing too, though it's little he lets on ; but he often looks thinking, and is fighting with the poor schoolmaster about the school : and then as for the young Mistress, you wouldn't know her,—writing letter after letter to Eversham Hall, and never riding or driving anywhere but to the Glebe, and blinding her eyes reading the Bible, and never faulting the housemaid about the grates."

"That's quite enough, my good girl. I'm only anxious for Miss Murphy's recovery.

and I don't want to know anything about the Master or Mistress or the ways of the house."

"Well, Sir, I know that," continued Olivia, with increased ardour; "but somehow the whole world is changing, and there's no telling where it will end, if they don't let us alone. We can't live in the country seeing their doings. The sight left my own eyes last Sunday, when I seen Andy Britton tramping to church, and brazening it out before the people, as if he wasn't ashamed of himself. Oh, there's the Mistress! It would be as good as my place is worth to be seen opening my mind to a Protestant gentleman; but when *you* axed me all about it, Sir, sure it wasn't my business to say I wouldn't answer you." And Olivia disappeared by a side-door into the kitchen.

The Doctor proceeded to visit his patient, and found that Mrs. Ireton had been before him. He anticipated, of course, the worst

results from her visit ; but found that after all, although Mrs. Ireton had been a little too abrupt in her manner, Agnes was not in the least injured by her visit. It would, perhaps, be more correct to say that Agnes was benefited by Mrs. Ireton's conversation, and for this reason : Mrs. Ireton spoke to her as one who had but a short time to live, and comforted her with the words of Holy Scripture ; and Agnes knew that what Mrs. Ireton said was true, and appreciated the Christian benevolence which led her to take such a deep interest in her case. Dr. Beggs, on the contrary, persisted in keeping his patient in ignorance of her danger, and Agnes knew that he was deceiving her. Each time that he visited her this attempt at deception became more and more evident. He would, for instance, assure Agnes that wonders might yet be effected by the use of such and such remedies, and by exercise in the open air as the summer advanced ; and ten minutes afterwards, as he walked

downstairs with Miss Eyrebury, he would tell her, in confidence, that Agnes had not many weeks, perhaps not many days, to live.

"If a poor body," cried Augusteen, indignantly, one day, as he left the room, "was to tell lies as fast as that man, the worst word from a dog wouldn't be thought bad enough for them. Och ! he well knows, Miss Agnes, that he's telling lies. He well knows that you'll be gone before the last wind blows away the spring ; and then what good can the summer do, if it was as fine as the longest day and the brightest sun could make it ? It delayed too long already if it was wanting to be of any service to you."

"I suppose," said Agnes, in a feeble voice, "he means it kindly ; and I ought to be thankful to him, though he little guesses what sorrowful news it would be to me if I believed it."

"I confess," said Miss Eyrebury, who

had just come into the room, "I cannot understand a young person like you, Agnes, talking of its being a sorrowful thing to live. Life ought to be dear to us all, and we ought to wish to prolong it."

"You cannot understand my feelings, Miss Eyrebury," said Agnes, very faintly, and speaking with great difficulty; "but it seems to me death would be better than life just now. Of death I have no fear. Life might prove a curse to me instead of a blessing. In any case it will be full of trials and temptations, of which I have had enough, and from which my Saviour Christ is about to deliver me for ever."

Miss Eyrebury was silent for some minutes; then looking earnestly at Agnes, she said, "I wish I could be sure that I should have the same feeling when I am as near death as I am sure you are."

And why shouldn't you, Miss Eyrebury?" said Agnes, in a feebler voice than before. "Haven't you the Book,—the Book which

taught me all I know? Can't you read it as I have read it, and learn what it teaches?"

Miss Eyrebury was again silent for some time, partly from want of courage to speak of her own religious experience, and partly from a desire not to excite Agnes. At last she ventured to say, "I have read the Bible, that is, parts of the Bible regularly, but I can't say that it has given me that confidence which you possess, that trust in Christ which enables you to face death without the slightest fear, indeed, to prefer it to a life beset with sorrow and temptation."

Agnes was quite unable to reply for a time; but gathering up her strength a little, she succeeded in saying to Miss Eyrebury, "I was always slow at learning, and I would be a poor teacher at the best; but all I can say is, the New Testament is the book which taught me that which gives me comfort now, and it will teach you. It taught me that God loves poor sinners, that He

sent His Son to die for them, and that, no matter how bad or foolish or ignorant they are, they may go to Him for salvation. As soon as I brought my mind to trust in Christ, I had peace, and the more trust the more peace I have."

"I am afraid I must leave you now," said Miss Eyrebury kindly. "You are talking too much, and will exhaust yourself."

"Just one word before you go, Miss Eyrebury," said Agnes: "I may not be strong enough to say it another day. When I am gone, don't reproach my relations for what they have done to me. They meant kindly; it was their ignorance of what was for my soul's good which led them to treat me so badly. I forgive them, and I hope God will forgive them, and bring them to see their error. And take care of that poor girl,"—pointing to Augusteen, "for my sake. She has been very kind to me, and I never can repay her, but God will."

"Now Miss," interrupted Augusteen, "I

wonder how you an't cautious of bringing down your mind from above to be wasting your thoughts on me. The world's wide, and it'll be very hard if I can't find a spot in it to fit me, as long as I'm left in it. Don't think of me, Miss ; only when you are able lift up a prayer to God in your heart for me, and ask Him to be good to me when He orders me away out of this world. But as long as I'm in it, never heed me. I never had much in it, and what matter about it."

Miss Eyrebury assured Agnes that her requests should be attended to. As for Augusteen, she said she might go to England with her, and Winter would make a useful servant of her in time.

About three weeks after this conversation took place, Agnes Murphy, whose bodily frame grew every day weaker and weaker, whilst her spiritual perception grew brighter and brighter, breathed her last, in the presence of Miss Eyrebury, Winter, and Augusteen.

Miss Eyrebury and Winter, when their presence had become unnecessary, withdrew, not without deep sorrow at the early death of one who had been driven, by the remarkable circumstances which we have related, to cast herself upon them for protection, and whom they had learned sincerely to esteem.

Augusteen, faithful to the last, sat mourning beside the remains of her beloved friend. She made no attempt to restrain her grief, but let her tears flow without checking the emotion that caused them to pour down her sorrow-stricken cheeks. Every now and then she broke forth into that passionate, hysterical cry, which is peculiar to the peasantry of Ireland, when they are labouring under deep emotion or overwhelmed by intense grief; and when her kind and sympathizing heart had been a little relieved by this outburst of strong feeling, she settled down into a calmer frame of mind, and gave utterance to the following soliloquy :—

“Ah, Miss Agnes, there you lie! and sure

it's I that ought to be glad that you have left all pain and sorrow and sickness behind you. Them people that once trated you badly will find many to harbour with, but they cannot overtake you again; seeing there's no room for them where you are gone. Sure I would'nt bring you back again, only for the pleasure of looking at your mild face. Sure I don't grudge you to God, who has done better for you nor all I could ever do. Och! it's well for me and well for you that He didn't ask my leave, but ordered it all Himself. And didn't He do it well who first made your bed asy in sickness, and then stole you away to heaven without yourself knowing it? You had a stormy day of it; but wasn't the evening beautiful and peaceable, and didn't you go to rest as if there was nothing like trouble in the world? Didn't you lay down your head in hopes to raise it joyful before God, because there's One above that made your peace for you? Will I die that way? Oh;

God, grant that I may! Oh, may He that led me like a poor blind creature so far in a way that I didn't know, never let me go to wander where I like; but may He guide and keep me till He brings me safe to that blessed place where He brought you before me."

And Augusteen wept, and wept again, until nature was completely exhausted; and as she sat beside the remains of her friend, her head dropped on the pillow on which rested the head of the poor corpse, and she fell into a profound sleep, from which it seemed almost a pity that she should ever be awakened to do battle with the world that lay before her.

THE END.

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